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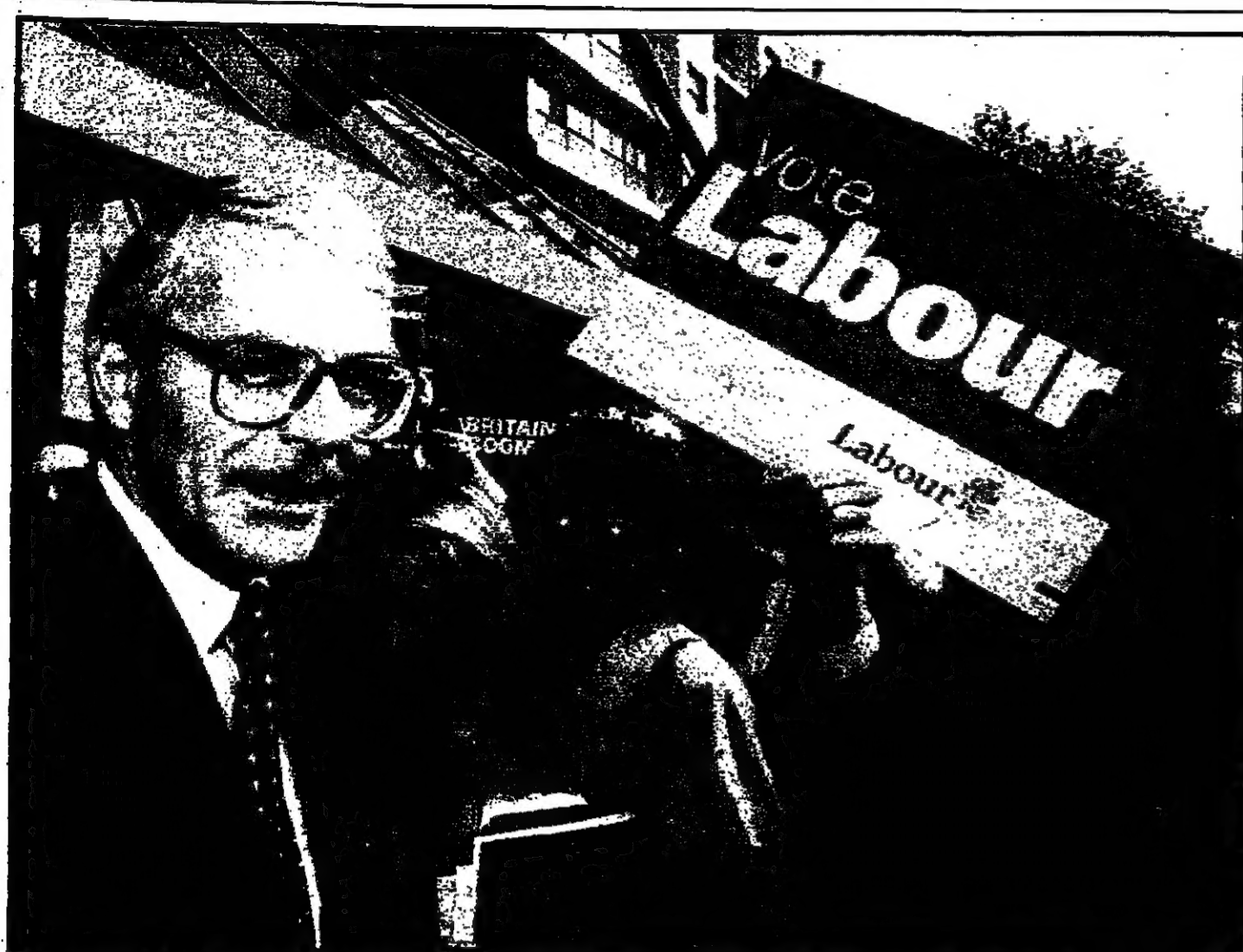
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Labor supporters heckle Prime Minister John Major yesterday, as he makes his way through north London. (Reuters)

Labor set for big UK election win

LONDON (Reuters) - Prime Minister John Major yesterday ignored polls showing his Conservatives heading for a crushing election defeat, saying he is optimistic his party's economic achievements would guarantee victory.

But it seems almost everyone else in Britain expects the Labor Party, under Tony Blair, to sweep into power today, ending 18 years of Conservative rule.

An NOP/Reuters poll released 17 hours before voting began showed the Conservatives lagging 22 points behind Labor, riding high on the support of 50 per cent of the electorate.

Analysts said they had expected taking bets on a Labor victory, and Major's Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, optimistic throughout the six-week campaign, for the first time turned his attention to the consequences of defeat.

Major remained unprepared



to countenance defeat, returning to a favorite theme that voters cannot trust Labor on economic policy.

"No one can honestly question that the transformation in Britain has been anything less than an economic miracle. It's too good to give up," he told the campaign's final news conference.

"It would be a tragedy if these

opportunities were lost by the false attraction of a well-packaged marketing scam," Major said in reference to Labor's slick, no-risks campaign.

He dismissed the opinion polls, which wrongly forecast he would lose the 1992 election.

"I don't share their opinion ... that we're going to lose tomorrow. I think this election is there to be won. There are huge numbers of people who are undecided," Major told BBC radio.

The NOP/Reuters poll points to Labor winning more than 440 seats in the 659-seat Parliament, the biggest majority since 1924. But analysts think such a victory is unlikely because of the vagaries of Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system.

In the four elections since Labor last held power in 1979, the Conservatives have not polled more than 44% of the vote.

Blair was also cautious about

the result and urged Britain's 44 million voters to come out and vote Labor to avoid a fifth successive Conservative term.

Blair told supporters in north-east England: "It's there, it can be done. With your support we can do it. Let us together tomorrow come out, support the Labor Party, build that better Britain and give our children the future they need."

Labor's lead has been steady for two years and has held up since Major called the election on March 17, hoping to wear Labor down with the longest campaign for more than 80 years.

Support for the minority Liberal Democrats is also firm at around 15%, compared to Labor's 50, and the Conservatives' 30. The Liberal Democrats could hold the balance of power if neither Labor nor the Conservatives gain a majority.

Magen to quit government

Slams Netanyahu on Bar-On Affair

By SARAH HONIG

Deputy Finance Minister David Magen of Geshet is to meet with his faction's leader, Foreign Minister David Levy, today in an attempt to persuade him to quit the coalition and trigger early elections. Magen is then expected to tender his resignation to Finance Minister Dan Meridor and become a rank and file MK, likely to join the opposition to the government.

reinvigorated Knesset might go in different directions. Perhaps a new Knesset would be a better one and



David Magen (Yossi Zelig/UPPA)

Who's David Magen? Page 3

Levy is not expected to follow Magen's lead, nor is he expected to convince Magen to reconsider.

Magen said yesterday that he has been unhappy in his post for a while, but what finally moved him to quit was "the show staged by the prime minister on Pessah eve after the state attorney's report on the Bar-On Affair was released. His speech was an insult to the listeners' intelligence and I felt I cannot go on serving in his government."

Magen stressed that his aim "is not to bring down the government, but to call new elections. This government has fallen short of expectations and the nation would benefit from new elections. A new,

early elections will be unavoidable. This government will not live out its term."

As an MK, Magen added, he will "be better able to express myself. As a deputy minister I am not free to speak and vote my mind and I feel that what I have to say can't remain unsaid."

No surprise was expressed in Geshet yesterday at Magen's move, as he was known to be unhappy with the job he got when the government was formed and has grown increasingly dissatisfied. Moreover, his status as Geshet's No. 2 was declining. Rivals like MKs Michael Kleiner and Maxim Levy were capturing the headlines, while the question being asked in Geshet branches was where had Magen disappeared.

Levy is not expected to respond favorably to Magen's entreaties that he, too, abandon the coalition. However, Geshet will be running its own municipal campaign in the upcoming local elections as a demonstration of its independent identity. With that in mind, Geshet is opening new branches and Magen, it is said, may be placed in charge of the campaign.

In the Likud faction, the expectation is more will be heard from Magen, who will join MK Ze'ev Begin's acerbic opposition to Netanyahu. Magen is expected to focus on socioeconomic issues.

Pollard to High Court: Force PM to acknowledge me

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

Spy Jonathan Pollard yesterday petitioned the High Court of Justice to order the prime minister to declare that he had been an agent of Israel.

Pollard also requested a temporary injunction ordering the government to reveal who has been in charge of his case and what steps have been taken to secure his release.

The petition also queries the official Israeli position, according to which Pollard had been part of a rogue operation. It calls for a temporary injunction ordering the state to outline what it paid Pollard for his services and to provide details of a bank account in Switzerland, in which he said Israel was supposed to have deposited \$300,000 over 10 years.

Last July, Pollard was granted Israeli citizenship following a petition to the High Court.

Last night, the High Court issued a temporary injunction, apparently at the request of security authorities, forbidding publication of details of the petition, but lifted the ban shortly afterwards following a petition by Yediot Aharanot.

Pollard, then a civilian intelligence analyst working for the US Navy, was arrested with his first wife, Anne, outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington, where they sought asylum, on November 21, 1985. He pleaded guilty in



Jonathan Pollard and his wife, Esther Zeitz-Pollard

1986 to spying for Israel and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Anne Pollard was later released from jail and made aliyah in January 1991.

Pollard is being held at the Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, North Carolina. His lawyer, Larry Dubb, yesterday released a document showing that Pollard, 42, is suffering from arthritis and early glaucoma.

Anne Pollard said last night she is very happy her ex-husband filed the petition. "While the average Israeli recognizes our sacrifice for the state, I've been waiting for the

prime minister and government to formally recognize this," she said. "I hope the government won't neglect its obligations toward us."

Her hope was echoed by Pollard's second wife, Esther Zeitz-Pollard. "We have nothing to lose," she said. "The prime minister's advisers keep telling us that 'this is not the time.'" she told Army Radio.

Zeitz-Pollard said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had promised her he would raise the issue in meetings with US

Continued on Page 2

Netanyahu: Peace process alive

By MICHAEL TUDELMAN

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday denied a senior Foreign Ministry official's contention that the peace process is dead.

Speaking on CNN, Netanyahu said it is up to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to advance the peace process and solve the problems between them.

David Afek, head of the Foreign Ministry's political research center, had told a meeting of the ministry's management that the peace process is dead after the United Nations condemnation of Israel, Israel Radio reported yesterday.

Afek was reported to have said Israel is alone and, as long as it fails to take the initiative vis-a-vis the talks with the Palestinians, it will remain without partners.

Afek noted the Americans are not with Israel, Europe isn't either, nor is the Arab world. Israel's positions are not accepted

in the world, and it needs a political initiative "to tell us where we're heading. Without that, the situation will only get worse," he said.

Jordan's King Hussein, who appeared on the CNN program along with Netanyahu, said: "It is fair to say that the hopes we had a few years ago, the promise of a future of fulfillment, have some-

The closure is over, Page 2

how been dimmed by events, and the minority of extremists from both here and there have dictated their agenda upon us."

He expressed hope that Netanyahu could reassure Jordan that he intends to carry out several measures the two countries had agreed upon concerning the Palestinians, including building an airport in Dahaniya, establishing a sea port in Gaza, establishing economic ties and improving human relations.

The king also spoke of the importance of creating a basis of trust for negotiations to progress further.

Netanyahu denied reports of massive construction plans in the

settlements and in quarters around Jerusalem, stressing that only existing settlements will be expanded.

He announced that in two weeks construction of housing for Arabs will begin in Jerusalem, in addition to the building already going on for the city's Jewish residents.

He also said he is working on ways to return the identity cards of Arab residents of eastern Jerusalem who had been denied the renewal of these cards.

Hussein said that any change in the status quo only creates bigger problems.

He stressed that before the peace negotiations or the talks on final status, "why add to the already complicated situation new elements which will cause greater lack of confidence and antagonism, and lead to reactions we would all like to avoid?"

Netanyahu called on both Israelis and Palestinians to lower their expectations and to make difficult decisions to bridge the gap between conflicting claims, and between expectations and reality.

Hussein urged Netanyahu to "move away from the public scene" and hold private talks to advance the peace process.

He said too many declarations

from all directions only confuse and do not reflect what is happening.

Netanyahu responded: "I think you're right," and said he hopes to find a place to hold discreet talks, preferably without media coverage.

He noted that without US involvement, it would be impossible to advance or conclude the peace process and called on the US to take a leading role in pushing talks ahead.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy met to formulate gestures which Israel may make toward the Palestinians to help restart negotiations.

The meeting was scheduled to lay the groundwork for Levy's meeting with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tomorrow, but Tuesday night the meeting was put off by two weeks due to Albright's absence from Washington.

The Israeli announcement of the meeting caused some confusion in Washington, where senior officials said no such meeting had been scheduled for Friday.

Levy reportedly has raised suggestions for confidence-building measures which would enable the resumption of talks with the Palestinians.

Israel beat Cyprus 2-0

Israel, much revamped after disciplinary troubles, kept its lead at the top of European Group Five after scoring a convincing 2-0 win over Cyprus in its World Cup qualifier yesterday.

Veteran striker Eli Ohana scored both goals. Israel leads the group on 13 points, two clear of Russia, which beat Luxembourg 3-0 in Moscow.

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NEWS

in brief

Palestinian shot to death at roadblock

An unidentified Palestinian man was shot to death early yesterday by border policemen, when the driver of the car he was riding in tried to run one of them down at a Jerusalem roadblock.

When border policemen tried to flag down a suspicious-looking car at about 1 a.m. near Beit Hanina, the car sped off. They chased it and fired warning shots, after which the driver stopped. As officers approached on foot, however, the driver reversed and came at them, upon which they shot at the car, which crashed into a parked truck and stopped. The driver escaped on foot and the policemen found another man seriously wounded by gunshots in the front seat. He died at Hadassah-University Hospital in Ein Kerem.

Ben-Porat asked to probe NRP-linked groups

MK Dedi Zucker (Meretz) has asked State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat to investigate the actions of two non-profit associations, affiliated with the National Religious Party, which are signing up residents for the Har Homa neighborhood. He said the groups are the Young Religious Zionists, which operates from the NRP's offices in Jerusalem, and Al Homotavich, which is linked with Yeshivat Orot.

Zucker said the two groups intend persuading the government to give residents of Har Homa special benefits. He asked Ben-Porat to investigate whether the NRP is connected to lobbying for special benefits.

Galilee villager stabbed in clan rivalry

Another resident of Turan village in Lower Galilee was stabbed last night, bringing to four those seriously hurt in riots between Christian and Muslim clans in the past week. The wounded man, a member of the Christian Khouri family, was taken to nearby Poriya Hospital, where two stabbing victims from the Muslim Dahleh family are still in the intensive care unit from a previous incident.

New IDF head in Gaza

Col. Yoav Gallant takes over command of the IDF forces in the Gaza Strip today, Gallant, a former head of the naval underwater commando unit, will be replacing Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Eitan.

Kahalani visits Zavitzky family

Paying a condolence visit to the family of Hagit Zavitzky in Kfar Adumim yesterday, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani told the family that there was still no breakthrough in the murder investigation. The bodies of Zavitzky and Liat Kastiel were discovered lying 80 meters apart in a pool of water at the bottom of Wadi Kelt last Friday. Channel 1 reported last night that a Beduin from the Kabaneh tribe, Tail Musa Malihat, had turned himself in to the General Security Service for questioning and has since been released.

Monitoring committee accepts Israel's complaint

The IDF Spokesman said last night that the five-nation Grapes of Wrath monitoring committee had accepted Israel's complaint that mortars fired from Lebanon last Friday had fallen inside Israeli territory. The monitoring committee, which completed two days of discussions into the complaint, found there was no evidence to support a Lebanese charge that IDF troops earlier this week had fired at a Lebanese bus.

IDF-Turkish-US exercises planned

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Israel and Turkey are working to increase strategic ties, including holding joint military exercises and combating terrorism, but both insist the strategic alliance is not directed at any third party.

Visiting Turkish Defense Minister Turhan Tayan flies to the North today for a first-hand look at the Lebanese and Syrian borders and the Golan Heights. He is to receive a briefing from OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine.

Tayan's visit is to set the stage for next week's meeting with Turkish Deputy Chief of Staff Gen. Chabek Beer, who will be leading the periodic strategic dialogue between the two countries.

High on the list of topics is to be Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's initiative to hold joint maneuvers among Israel, Turkey, and the U.S. The Americans have already agreed in principle.

Israel is already upgrading 54 F-4 fighters for the Turkish air force in a deal worth over \$600 million, and both sides are discussing the possibility of another deal to upgrade Turkey's F-5s in a deal worth over \$300 million, Israeli Aircraft Industries officials said.

Israel is also competing with three other countries for a deal to upgrade Turkey's M-60 tanks.

Tayan was received by a full military honor guard at the Defense Ministry, after which he



Turkish Defense Minister Turhan Tayan yesterday inspected one of the Turkish F-4 Phantoms being upgraded by Israeli Aircraft Industries. (Arief Shilo/Israel Sun)

was briefed on the threats facing Israel, particularly the proliferation of surface-to-surface missiles and non-conventional weapons. Mordechai told Tayan that both Israel and Turkey suffer from the

threat of terror and that Israel is willing to extend aid to Turkey in combating terrorism. "The security cooperation between Israel and Turkey is not directed against any third party,"

Mordechai said during a briefing with Tayan. "Cooperation is vital for both countries and for strengthening the stability of the Middle East."

Tayan said the strategic coopera-

tion "is not pointing arrows at any third party. Turkey sees relations as very important and I believe they will bring stability to the region and advance the peace process."

Little joy over lifting of closure

By JON IMMANUEL

Saying the four-year closure is over, the government allowed 56,000 Palestinians to enter Israel from the West Bank and Gaza yesterday, the highest number since September 1994. But Israeli human rights groups and Palestinian officials reacted with-out joy, despite a longstanding demand that the closure be lifted.

A little more than half the number permitted came to work. A security official at the Erez crossing said that 15,000 Gazan workers crossed through Gaza checkpoints yesterday, up from 10,000 two weeks ago but far short of the 28,000 now allowed in. The number will increase as the 28,000 figure is approached, as long as there is no security deterioration, the security official said.

Kav La'oved, the workers' hotline, estimated that no more than two-thirds will find work. Foreign workers are the main

problem facing Palestinian employment inside Israel. They receive far less pay than employers will have to pay to legally employed Palestinians.

"Foreign workers get two-thirds what Palestinians get, because Palestinians are paid through the payroll department of the Labor Ministry. Foreign workers work 12 hours a day," said Hanna Zohar, director of Kav La'oved. "Palestinians will have no chance to get jobs in agriculture, where workers from Thailand are employed, and the Building Contractors' Association says building is slowing down." Yesterday's edition of Al-Ayyam, the Ramallah-based daily, ran "Israel lifts the closure today" as its top story, but prominently quoted an adviser of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat as saying there would be no exchange of jobs for settlements.

Al Hayat al-Jadida, the news-

paper closest to Arafat, hardly mentioned the closure, but prominently noted the problem of the Muwasi lands in Gush Katif and Hamas spokesman Mahmoud Zahar's refusal to attend a "national dialogue" meeting in Nablus Tuesday because of "Israeli occupation policies." One of the conditions of participating in the conference was said to be readiness not to support unilateral violence against Israelis.

The government has been calculating that the prospect of an improved economy will reduce Palestinian violence. But if 50,000 find work now that will still be 10,000 short of the figure the IMF considers necessary to prevent the further decline of the Palestinian economy. More than 60,000-70,000 Palestinians must work in Israel to reduce the decline. More than 100,000 worked in Israel in the 80s. The territories were first sealed in March 1993 after Hamas per-

petrated attacks inside Israel; shortly after it was eased and the numbers climbed to 59,000; after the October 1994 bus bombing on Tel Aviv's Rehov Dizengoff, Gaza was sealed again. The numbers began rising again only for the closure to slam down yet again after the spate of bombings in February 1996. It stayed down until well after the Israeli election in May.

The difference now is that the closure is being lifted despite attacks and warnings of attacks, and despite polls indicating that Palestinians support attacks. Furthermore, the state of the economy is not the main reason the polls give for that support, but Palestinian perceptions of Israeli land policies. But according to many Likud security experts, such as former deputy GSS chief Gideon Ezra, closures do less than other methods to enhance security, and can harm it.

Army denies Palestinian land-grab for Efrat

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Claims that 4,000 dunams of Palestinian-owned land have been confiscated to allow the expansion of Efrat were denied yesterday by the Civil Administration, the Efrat Local Council, and the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Civil Administration spokesman Lt. Peter Lerner said that the administration advertised in the Palestinian press two weeks ago outlining the current project in Efrat and stipulating that objections should be registered within 45 days. "We are talking about a total of 220 dunams that will be developed, and none of the land is privately owned," he said.

Efrat councilwoman Eve Harow said that in 1991, Efrat received 5,000 dunams of state-owned land from the government. She said that of the 5,000 dunams, only 1,000 have been developed so far. In addition, she said, approximately 500 dunams on Har Hazyza are being developed.

Yehudit Tayar, of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, called the Palestinian claims ridiculous. "It is obvious that there is a large area going on, and it is not that the Palestinians have asked for illegal building in order to stop settlement expansion," she said.

On a live satellite interview broadcast on CNN, prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu firmly denied the government plans to construct new settlements.

"Any construction taking place is within the current municipal boundaries," he said, adding that Palestinians are also building in their villages.

Meanwhile, reports in the local media concerning plans by the Defense Ministry for the construction of new bypass roads in autonomous areas and the West Bank were termed "rubbish" by the Council of Jewish Communities.

Avi Benayahu, media coordinator for Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai refused to comment, stating instead that since the Madrid Conference and Oslo talks, a network of bypass roads has been planned. Their aim is to solve security problems and prevent friction between Palestinians and Israelis.

Arief O'Sullivan adds: OC Gaza Strip Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Eitan yesterday denied there was an agreement to remove the ramparts erected to protect the settlement of Kfar Yam.

"The rampart will remain in place," he said. "We never obligated ourselves to anything and nothing has changed."

New publisher at 'The Post'

Norman Spector assumes the post of president and publisher of The Jerusalem Post today.

Spector, who served as Canada's ambassador to Israel from 1992-95, has a long record of public service in Canada, where he held a variety of posts in the provincial and federal governments. He holds a BA (Hons) from McGill University; an MS from the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University; and an MPhil and PhD from Columbia University. He speaks English, French, and Hebrew, with a knowledge of Russian and Arabic.

Yehuda Levy, who has served as president and publisher of The Post since 1989, assumes his new post



Norman Spector

today as vice-chairman of Jerusalem Post Staff.

With sorrow, we announce the death in Johannesburg of our brother and uncle

HENRY SELIGMAN

The Seligman Family
188 Ahuza St., Ra'anana



Bar-Ilan University

deeply mourns the passing of its matriarch

RUTH RACKMAN רות רצקמן

devoted wife for sixty-five years of Rabbi Prof. Emanuel Rackman, Chancellor of the University and past President a woman of exceptional strength and values, kindness and leadership

The entire Bar-Ilan University family: students, faculty, administration and leadership - mourns her departure, and extends condolences to its dear sage and leader, Rabbi Prof. Rackman.

In Zion and Jerusalem, we shall seek consolation.

The funeral took place yesterday, in New York.

Arms cache uncovered in Hebron

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Detectives from the Hebron police station and IDF troops raided the home of a 54-year-old Palestinian in Hebron yesterday and discovered a Browning machine gun, a hunting rifle, a Czech rifle, a metal detector, and a box full of different types of ammunition.

According to Judea and Samaria Police spokesman Ofer Shvan, the man and his son, in his 30s, were taken for questioning.

Last night, two firebombs were thrown at Beit Hadassah in Hebron. They both hit a window of the apartment belonging to the Kizmi family. The Hebron Jewish community demanded that the police and IDF reassess the current security regulations.

Meanwhile, reports that some settlers have had their weapons confiscated by the IDF were confirmed by the IDF. MK Haim Porat, and the

Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Porat said that he had received several complaints from settlers in Kiryat Arba who had their weapons confiscated.

"Some of them serve as officers in the reserves," he said, adding that he had transferred a list of the settlers' names to the Prime Minister's Office. Porat claimed he had heard of similar cases throughout Judea and Samaria, but was unable to divulge the number of settlers involved.

However, council spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar said that the council had heard of approximately 30 cases of weapons being confiscated by the army over the past month.

Central Command issued a statement yesterday confirming that dozens of settlers have had their weapons confiscated out of thousands who applied for a permit renewal.

Labor panel nixes Palestinian state

The Labor convention in two weeks will have to decide whether the party platform will include the term "Palestinian state" and whether present chair-

man Shimon Peres will become the party's first president.

The presidential issue was left unresolved by the central committee, which met yesterday, but the convention steering committee rejected the political committee's proposed resolution that the platform express recognition of Palestinian national rights and state explicitly that "Labor does not rule out the creation of a Palestinian state."

When it drew up its 1996 election platform, Labor did away with a previous plank which called out the establishment of a separate Palestinian state.

The political committee's proposed resolution, drafted by party leadership candidate MK Shlomo Ben-Ami, fomented a stormy debate at the steering

committee. The committee will now not recommend the resolution, but the convention is free to adopt it anyway.

The fight against the resolution was led by party secretary-general Nissim Zivili, on the grounds that it is inexpedient to change a platform put together only a year ago. He argued, "We do not have to overhaul our policies every year. There is no need to be more explicit than necessary."

Ben-Ami replied that "perhaps the next elections will be held only in 2000. By then, the facts created may make a Palestinian state unavoidable, if not already on the ground. Will we still find it impossible to call a spade a spade?"

POLLARD

Continued from Page 1

President Bill Clinton met Netanyahu did not even whisper his name. (Jonathan) has been in the United States for 12 years and the situation is hopeless.

The prime minister will continue to do everything in his power to bring Jonathan Pollard to Israel. Netanyahu's spokesman said in a statement last night, stating the prime minister "transfers the Pollard case" to the relevant authorities.

Washington.

Attorney General Eyalim Rubinfeld, who was minister at the embassy when the Pollards were arrested, yesterday denied he had been responsible for their arrest. Rubinfeld released a cable to the Foreign Ministry sent immediately after the incident, in which he says he learned afterward that the Pollards had been turned away. He also released two letters to senior US officials in which he pleaded for clemency for Pollard on humanitarian grounds.

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מקלט האוכל

Christian-Moslem dispute escalates

Church leader: Moslems tried to break into Church of the Holy Sepulcher

By HAIM SHAPIRO

The confrontation between Christian and Moslem institutions in Jerusalem's Old City escalated sharply yesterday with charges by a church leader that Moslems had attempted to break into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The Moslem leader responsible for the disputed construction work, which Christians said encroaches on their property and violates the sanctity of the ancient church, denied Moslems had taken over any Christian area and refused to recognize the right of the municipality to stop the work.

In the dispute, which relates to construction work at the Khanka Salah Mosque, which abuts the church, representatives of the three historic churches - Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and Roman Catholic - allege that the Moslem Wakf had constructed toilets over the church. This would violate the status quo which has tempered interreligious relations in the city for over two centuries.

In addition, the Greek Orthodox said that the Moslems had broken into and occupied two rooms in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

However yesterday, in a press tour of the disputed area organized by the Government Press Office, Metropolitan Timothy, secretary of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, said that the Moslem workmen had attempted to break into the church. Relating that church officials had found stones and debris from the church wall, Timothy said that he did not know why the workmen had tried to break in.

The tour revealed a maze of interconnecting structures, with rooms carved out of buildings representing different layers of history and often not serving their original function. On the Greek Orthodox side, one walked



Greek Orthodox Archbishop Alexei points to the blocked entranceway of a room in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher yesterday. (Rym McBurney)

through a winding series of passages and rooms to find two doors which open onto doorways roughly blocked with stones and cement blocks.

On the Moslem side, an equally convoluted passage leads up a flight of stairs, past a living area, to what apparently once had been a Crusader hall, and now is functioning as a mosque. According to one version, it was only the small hall at street level which had constituted the original mosque, while according to another version, the upstairs mosque had served dignitaries, including Saladin.

At the entrance to the upstairs room, Sheikh Yakoub Rajaby, who is responsible for the mosque,

pointed to a newly plastered wall in what now constitutes the entrance hall, defying media representatives to find the two rooms described by the Greek Orthodox. "The priests said here were rooms and we stole them. You see this is the main entrance of the mosque," he said.

Clearly the newly plastered area had originally been one room and it had apparently been connected to the hall now serving as a mosque, but whether this had been the case since Saladin captured Jerusalem in 1187 or even for the past century or two, is unclear.

On the other side of the entrance, along a wall abutting the northern edge of the Church of the Holy

Sepulcher, the work on the new toilet complex is continuing, despite an order to stop issued at the request of the Jerusalem Municipality. Rajaby said the Wakf will not honor the request.

"The municipality has no authority here, only the Moslem Wakf. Only God can stop the work here," he said.

It was virtually impossible to determine whether the new toilets actually extended over the Christian sanctuary, as the Christians insist, or whether the outer wall of the church is as much as 18 or 20 meters from the construction area, as Rajaby averred. Photographers scrambled over walls and onto rooftops in a vain

attempt to actually see how far the church extended.

According to the GPO, which described the building work as "illegal construction in the heart of the Christian Quarter," the incident began two years ago when the Wakf "took control" of what it described as an underground hall (apparently the Crusader hall) under the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, an act which later led to the appropriation of the two rooms in the Patriarchate.

The GPO also said that the toilet complex, built of reinforced concrete, damages the ancient character of the site and could lead to future deterioration of the original structure.

Zissmann: Education minister shares blame for Naharayim tragedy

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The personal findings in the Pressler Commission report on the Naharayim tragedy "were not strong enough" and the education minister, deputy minister and ministry director-general should not be absolved of all responsibility, Knesset Education Committee chairman MK Emanuel Zissmann (Third Way) said yesterday.

Speaking during the committee's session on the commission's findings, Zissmann said that a previous meeting of the Education Committee on the Naharayim incident - in which seven Beit Shemesh schoolgirls were slain by a Jordanian soldier on March 13 - had determined that while the ministry might have been formally covered regarding its responsibility in the incident, "ethically, it was not. Now we see that the Pressler Commission came to a similar conclusion, and the findings show that the ministry wasn't even covered formally."

Pressler himself told the committee that despite the fact that the site was supposed to be off-limits to school trips, "thousands of pupils and dozens of schools went there, creating a gap" between the Education Ministry's guidelines and what the situation was really like.

"The AMIT Pessah School erred in not writing its intention to visit Naharayim on its itinerary," he said, "most of the principals did

not know they were not permitted to visit there."

"It is also true that there has not been proper supervision of tour companies. The commission concluded that procedures within the ministry must be changed, and that personal conclusions should be drawn regarding certain individuals, the main one being that the head of security in the ministry should be replaced."

"The system must also oversee the implementation of its orders, and not just set procedure," MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud) said during the discussion of the commission's report. "A 'mass violation' [of the rules] requires a response and prevention, and if the rules are being disregarded, then responsibility must be taken at the highest echelon."

"I can't accept that a school principal is too busy and can't look into the details of a trip," said MK Ze'ev Boim (Likud). "The problem today is that companies provide trip services instead of teachers. This is an educational and systemic problem that we must fix."

While Zissmann said that the upper echelon at the ministry should bear some responsibility for what happened, he stressed that "we should not forget that a Jordanian soldier carried out this act, and we will not rest until the murderer is properly punished. The Jordanians are responsible for security and safety in the Naharayim region."

Knesset subcommittee to address hospital workers' demands

By JUDY SIEGEL

Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz yesterday decided to set up a special subcommittee to deal with the demands of government hospital workers for additional salary grades, as promised in an unimplemented wage contract.

The committee's commitment to discuss the matter shortly before Pessah brought about a suspension of sanctions by hospital maintenance and administrative personnel, who had threatened not to prepare the institutions for the holiday. Ravitz personally promised to deal with the demands for 1,300 additional salary grades.

Ravitz, MK Haim Oron, and MK Avraham Hershtou will form the subcommittee. Representatives of the Finance and Health ministries

and the Civil Service Commission also were present at the meeting. Ravitz and Hishdruz chairman MK Amir Perez demanded that the Treasury approve some of the salary grade increases "on account" as a show of good will until the issue is resolved, but ministry official Yuval Rahelevsky said he would have to consult with his superiors and give an answer by Sunday.

Meanwhile, no statement has been forthcoming from the Health Ministry about how it will cope with the impending "financial collapse" of the health system that Minister Yehoshua Matza had predicted would come "after Pessah."

Matza, who spent 10 days before the holiday in China on an official visit, is due to fly to Geneva to attend the World Health Assembly and meet health ministers from nearly a dozen other countries.

BACKGROUND

Who is David Magen?

By SARAH HONIG

David Magen was a typical product of the Likud of the 1970s - the sort of product the Likud pointed to proudly as representing the party's unique openness in those days, when all parties were still governed by appointments committees operating out of notorious smoke-filled back rooms.

The former IDF major rose in the ranks quickly from total anonymity. The septets system, which preceded primaries, allowed new unmonitored names to emerge from nowhere. Magen, a personable, articulate Kiryat Gat resident of Moroccan parentage, was one of a large number of young, politically attractive Sephardi up-and-coming politicians, which included the likes of Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, at a time when Labor was still

comparatively old, staid and very Ashkenazi.

Although he took over the minor Economics Ministry under the Shamir government, Magen didn't go as far as Katsav and he grew frustrated. The furthest he went was the highly successful municipal campaign which he managed for the Likud nearly five years ago. But in the past few years he had become more and more of a chronic malcontent.

On the eve of the last elections, he crossed his Rubicon and ended his relations with the Likud. He quit the party with much fanfare and joined David Levy in Geshet. He had become one of Geshet's most extreme and outspoken opponents of the Likud, urging Levy to run against Netanyahu in the race for prime minister. When Levy pulled back, Magen was horrified and sought to dissuade him.

He found himself on the Likud-led Knesset list despite himself, making no secret of his disapproval of Levy's decision to join the Likud-Tsomet ticket.

Levy reportedly promised him a ministerial appointment in the event of an electoral victory, but no one could foresee the beating the large parties would take at the hands of the smaller ones, a fact which resulted in too few portfolios to go around. Magen had to make do with an appointment he resented from the outset - deputy finance minister.

For many months, he privately told all who would listen that he wanted to quit and at the Finance Ministry no one knew what to do with him. It was said that his single accomplishment at the Treasury was an expensive remodeling job on his large office complex.

NEWS

in brief

Manbar petitions against remand extension

Tel Aviv District Court President Menahem Ilan yesterday heard businessman Nahum Manbar's appeal against having his remand extended until May 5. A decision is expected today. Manbar, who is suspected of security crimes, was arrested in March. The hearing was held behind closed doors. *Itim*

Rapist's appeal denied

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected the appeal of Ya'acov Gueta against his conviction for raping a young woman while he was a guest at her parents' home. The family had tried to get her to withdraw her complaint and, after Gueta was convicted, his wife had hired a private investigator to convince her to change her story. By telling her a series of lies, the investigator managed to get her to say that there had been no rape.

However, Court President Aharon Barak and justices Mishael Cheshin and Dalia Dorner did not accept the investigator's testimony as credible, saying his goal had not been to determine the truth, but to get the victim to withdraw her complaint against the defendant. *Itim*

Bar-Ilan University students call off strike

The Student Council at Bar-Ilan University yesterday announced it had called off the strike it began on April 17. The council said it had reached an agreement with the university to widen the council's scope of activities, including the opening of an employment agency. All disputes over fees students are requested to pay will be turned over to an outside arbitrator and, if necessary, money will be returned to students. *Aryeh Dean Cohen*

Tel Aviv man convicted of kidnapping ex-wife

Tel Aviv District Court yesterday convicted Shlomo Vashdi, of Tel Aviv, of kidnapping and attempting to murder his ex-wife. One night in April 1996, he broke into her home, abducted her, physically and mentally abused her, and then released her when she agreed to tell him that she loves him and promised not to file a police complaint against him. The judge noted that this followed a series of abusive incidents that occurred throughout their nine-year marriage. *Itim*

Civil Service sanctions continue

Some 10,000 civil service workers continued their work sanctions at 15 government agencies yesterday, and the sanctions will continue today. The workers are refusing to receive the public, answer phones or send mail or faxes.

The Interior Ministry is not issuing new ID cards or passports, and the Licensing Bureau is not conducting driving theory tests. The workers are protesting a Treasury delay in their salary increases. *Itim*

The Treasury THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

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- Bidders must have previously supplied boxes for storing archival material to large organizations and/or government ministries.
- Bidders must be able to supply all the boxes listed in the tender specifications contained in the appendices, in whatever quantity is ordered and with delivery to any location.
- All the documents required according to paragraph 15 must be attached to bids.
- Bids must be submitted using all the attached tender appendices and must include a price for all the items required. Every page must be signed.

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- Bidders must have previously supplied such boxes and files to large organizations and/or government ministries.
- Bidders must be able to supply all the boxes and files listed in the tender specifications contained in the appendices, in whatever quantity is ordered and with delivery to any location.
- All required documents, as detailed in paragraph 15, must be attached to bids.
- Bidders may submit prices for only some of the items listed in the tender appendices. Every page must be signed.

Pre-conditions applying to both tenders:

- Bidders must enclose certification attesting to a quality system in compliance with the international standard (ISO 9002) or, alternatively, confirmation that the bidder is in the process of obtaining such certification from the Israel Standards Institution or from any other authorized body operating in Israel.
- Bidders must commit themselves to completing the process of certification and must submit a report regarding the status of their application every three months. The Office of the Accountant General will verify such reports with the Israel Standards Institution or with any other authorized body.
- The Office of the Accountant General reserves the right to cancel the contract of the winning bidder if the said bidder terminates the process of acquiring the international standard (ISO 9002).
- Preference will be given to Israeli-made products and to products from areas of national preference, in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.
- The last date for submitting bids for both tenders is Monday, May 5, 1997, at 12 noon.
- Applications for the tender documents should be made by fax only, to 02-5317778, giving the following information:

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Details of the company bidding:

Name _____ Authorized Trader's no. _____

Address (including postal code) _____

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The tender documents and technical specifications will be sent as soon as the aforementioned information has been received by fax.

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9:30 - Knesset 4:30 - 7:00 - 11:00 - 11:30

1:00 - 1:30 - 1:45 - 2:00 - 2:15 - 2:30

2:30 - The Devil's Own 4:45 - 7:15 - RAV

MOR 1-7 - 8418988 Metro 430, 7, 9:30

GIL Michael 6, 7:30, 10 - Space Jam-The

SAINT 5, 7:30, 10

HADSA LEV Metro 4:45, 7:30, 10 - Space Jam 5,

7:15, 9:30 - 10:00 - 10:30 - 11:00 - 11:30

RAV CHEN - 622755 Metro 7, 9:30

The Devil's Own 9:30 - Space Jam 7, 9:30

All times: are p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

through all the shocking details



Manitoba farmers return from reinforcing a dike near Niverville yesterday in the bucket of a front-end loader. (Reuters)

Red River floods hit Manitoba

By DAVID CRAWF

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — The Red River flood forced thousands more Manitobans from their homes and overwhelmed one farming town, but authorities were heartened by reports that peak levels were less than projected.

St. Agathe, 25 kilometers south of Winnipeg, was inundated when floodwaters found a weak point in a temporary dike erected as the flood raged through communities in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Most of St. Agathe's 500 residents had been evacuated earlier.

A skeleton crew of three-dozen emergency workers managed to drive to safety in the pre-dawn darkness, but one military officer assisting the withdrawal suffered hypothermia.

Harsh weather buffeted emergency workers across the flood zone. Winds gusted at more than 50 kph and temperatures were close to freezing.

St. Agathe, unlike other Manitoba towns along the river, was not protected by a permanent ring dike. It is on relatively high ground and has never flooded in the past.

Larry Whitney, Manitoba's

chief flood engineer, said the floodwaters — whipped up by the high winds — entered rapidly through a railway line that served as part of the flood barrier.

"It happened so fast," said Richard Braut, a policeman who was in St. Agathe. "Within an hour the town was totally underwater."

Whitney said the permanent dikes at other flood-encircled towns were holding up well as the river's crest reached them. He said water levels around some of the towns were one-third of a meter less than projected.

Most of this city of 650,000 is

expected to be spared serious flooding because of a huge floodway, built in the 1960s, that diverts floodwater around Winnipeg.

In threatened areas on the southern outskirts of Winnipeg, 7,200 people had to leave their homes in compliance with a mandatory evacuation order. That raised the total number of evacuees in Manitoba to about 25,000.

Many of them may have to stay away from home for several weeks while a 30-kilometer-wide lake created by the flood slowly drains.

Sinn Fein's Adams set to regain seat

BELFAST (Reuters) — Britain and Ireland say a vote for Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams in today's general election is a vote for more terrorism by his IRA sympathizers.

Adams says the British government, pro-British Unionists and the Irish government are to blame. "I have been shot, my family has been shot at, my house has been

attacked, but I say to the people responsible that we must work together for peace."

"Sinn Fein believes that this election provides a new opportunity to restore the peace process," Adams said. "We think this conflict is approaching its endgame and the important thing is to get as much political strength as possible to bring that to negotiations."

Gerry Adams (Reuters)



But Adams, canvassing for support in West Belfast, the stronghold of Catholic nationalists who want a united Ireland, says a vote for Sinn Fein is a vote for peace.

He says his party needs to gain a foothold at the heart of Britain's political system. Sinn Fein says it could capture as many as three seats in the election but will leave

them empty, since to do otherwise would entail pledging allegiance to Britain.

At ease on his home ground, Adams appears unaffected by an unprecedented attack from the two governments that shaped a Northern Ireland peace initiative held hostage by Irish Republican Army warfare.

Adams wants immediate entry to peace talks on the region's future, but Britain says he will be barred until the IRA restores a 17-month ceasefire it broke in early 1996.

He moves about the streets of red-bricked terraced houses like a neighborhood boy made good. Everybody knows him. Adams asks them about the results of school sports games or says, "What's the craic?" — an Irish expression which means "What's happening?" He prefaces each electioneering rally with a few sentences of the Irish language.

Pundits tip Adams as front runner to regain the parliamentary seat he lost in 1992, after holding it since 1983.

Britain says that whether or not Adams wins a seat in parliament, he will remain barred from peace negotiations until the IRA renounces violence.



Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, waves to supporters from his helicopter on a campaign stop in Sutton, a London suburb, yesterday. (Reuters)

Liberal leader's losing battle

LONDON (Reuters) — Paddy Ashdown, a former marine commander, is fighting a losing battle trying to persuade Britons that a vote for his Liberal Democrat party will carry the same weight as one for Tony Blair's Labor party.

The leader of the third force in British politics is popular with voters and has campaigned tirelessly for today's election, often inspiring something close to pop star hysteria.

But Ashdown's party only attracts around 15 percent support in opinion polls. Thanks to a political system that always threatens to bury third forces, the Liberal Democrats look unlikely to improve on the 26 seats they already hold in parliament.

After 70 years under Ashdown, the Liberals have, however, become Britain's second party of local government, having overtaken the Conservatives in terms of council seats held.

They could also credibly claim to have influenced the Labor Party into adopting far-reaching plans for constitutional reform, including parliaments for Scotland and Wales.

Things have moved a long way since July 1988 when the little-known Ashdown, who was born in India in 1941, was elected leader of the Liberal Democrats.

Then, the party was reeling from a brief but damaging alliance with the even smaller Social Democrat Party, plagued by in-fighting and running a hefty deficit.

Ashdown said he had no natural gifts as a politician and had to work hard at speech-writing. But he gained in stature and credibility during the Gulf war in 1991, which gave him the chance to display his military background.

Then, months before the 1992 general election, he was rocked by revelations of a relationship he had with his former Secretary

in 1988, a minor scandal that earned him the tabloid nickname "Paddy Pantsdown." But the impact faded when his wife Jane stood by him.

At that election, the Liberals won 17.8% of the votes, but just 20 of the 651 seats in parliament thanks to Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system.

By-election successes and a defection by a disillusioned Conservative raised the figure to 26, with Ashdown adding to his reputation as a foreign affairs expert with trips to Bosnia at the height of the fighting there.

But the party's progress faltered when Tony Blair became Labor leader in 1994 and set about moving his party to the political center ground the Liberals traditionally occupied. Ashdown responded to the Blair threat by making it clear that if Blair needed him to sustain him in government, he would be ready to help.

Albania blast kills 22

TIRANA (Reuters) — An explosion ripped through a weapons store on a military base outside the Albanian capital yesterday, killing at least 22 people.

The cause of the blast at Qafe Shtame close to the town of Burrel, northeast of Tirana, was not immediately known.

"All the people that were inside the store at the time were killed," a government spokesman said. A huge fire engulfed two underground tunnels and destroyed many camp buildings. Police and rescue officials rushed to the area, a chrome-mining center in the mountains.

Government officials went to

Burrel to secure the area and prevent further explosions at two nearby depots.

The weapons store at Burrel was underground like many in Albania, where former Stalinist leader Enver Hoxha created a huge arsenal during his 46-year rule, fearing invasion of his isolationist state.

Many of Albania's 1,500 military arsenals were looted last month by people angered at the loss of savings when pyramid schemes collapsed. Unofficial estimates say that up to a million arms have been distributed among the 3.4 million population.

The nine-party government of

national reconciliation formed in March to halt the slide towards anarchy is trying to rebuild the army, many of whose members fled as unrest swept the Balkan nation.

Police report that frequent raids on arsenals continue as villagers stockpile arms. Twenty people were injured last week when an army depot in the northern district of Lezhe exploded as youths tried to steal explosives.

A fire also started at an arms depot in the village of Polikesh, south of Tirana, Tuesday as looters tried to break open armory vaults to steal the bronze savings. No one was injured in the incident.

Chicago columnist Royko dies at 64

CHICAGO (AP) — Mike Royko, the Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist whose biting sarcasm and empathy for the common man captured the gritty essence of Chicago for more than three decades, died Tuesday.

Royko, whose *Chicago Tribune* column was syndicated to more than 500 newspapers across the United States, died Tuesday afternoon after surgery for an aneurysm, a ruptured blood vessel.

Earlier last month, Royko underwent surgery for another aneurysm in Florida and doctors found evidence of a stroke.

Royko's column was a cornerstone of the daily newspaper for generations of Chicago readers. Royko joined the *Daily News* in 1954 and won the Pulitzer for his columns in 1972. He moved to the *Sun-Times* in 1978 when the *Daily News* folded, then jumped to the rival *Tribune* in 1984.

French navy ship explodes

CHERBOURG, France (AP) — A French naval ship preparing to destroy explosives in the Atlantic blew up and sank off the Normandy coast yesterday with 22 aboard, killing at least one.

Four others were missing and a number of the 17 rescued were hospitalized. Five were seriously hurt. The 43-meter *La Fidèle* was off Cherbourg, east of the naval port of Cherbourg, when the explosion occurred at 10:30 a.m., said a Defense Ministry

spokesman. Authorities earlier located the ship near La Hague, west of Cherbourg.

There was no immediate word on the exact cause of the blast.

The ship had been carrying explosives to be destroyed at sea, the ministry spokesman said. The spokesman said information on the number and type of explosives were not immediately available, but that it was a routine operation.

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College campuses give way to virtual classrooms

By RENE SANCHEZ

A new era is emerging on the United States' college campuses — one without campuses at all.

Across academia, some students are starting to conduct their college careers almost entirely by personal computer, interacting with professors and classmates on-line and rarely entering a classroom. Many universities are eagerly pursuing the idea of virtual degree programs even as they worry about how it eventually could transform college life.

At the University of Maryland, more than 70 students in the graduate school of management and technology embarked this year on earning full-fledged master's degrees through the Internet. Several other similar graduate programs are scheduled to begin there soon.

This year, Duke University, North Carolina, will graduate its first class of students with virtual master's degrees from its business school. Other large, mainstream institutions — Ohio University, the University of Florida, Purdue — also now have their first on-line MBAs.

In the West, meanwhile, the governors of 13 states are developing what may be the most ambitious on-line academic venture yet: a fully accredited virtual university that they intend to open, albeit in cyberspace, by early next year.

"We're starting to see a revolution," said Nick Allen, the dean of Maryland's University College. "These are real classes and real degrees, only a modem away."

Long-distance learning has been a small part of higher education for decades. But the days of professors and students mailing assignments back and forth every few weeks during a semester are fading. So, too, are the audio or video lecture tapes that have become a staple of correspondence courses. Now, more campuses are opening classes on the Internet, or experimenting with two-way video technology, to allow faculty and students who are far apart to interact without delay.

The styles of the virtual classes vary. In some, professors post class assignments and academic lectures on computer bulletin boards and require students to check in regularly with questions or their completed assignments. Other courses emphasize on-line computer chat rooms that allow a teacher and a class, or a group of students teaming up on an academic project, to work together simultaneously. Some programs obligate students to convene on campus a few times a semester, or at least at the start of a course.

So far, the new programs are mostly for graduate students and tend to attract far-flung professionals who want advanced degrees but lack time to attend traditional classes, or who cannot uproot their lives to study full-time on campus.

The initial experiments in on-line courses are proving to be so popular that many educators already foresee a day when virtual classrooms become an integral part of college life, competing with traditional campuses for students.

Hardly anyone is predicting the demise of those campuses. But with more adults returning to college, and with more students juggling jobs and courses at the same time, educators anticipate on-line degree programs will become a widespread option.

"We're only at the very beginning of this," said Wayne Peay, a faculty member at the University of Utah who is helping plan the on-line campus that will bear the name Western Governors University.

The initial experiments in on-line courses are proving so popular that many educators foresee a day when virtual classrooms become an integral part of college life.

To some academics, the prospect of virtual universities is at once thrilling and troublesome. Some professors say they worry that as universities turn more attention to distance learning by computer, they stand to lose as much as they gain.

College, some faculty members contend, should not merely be a collection of courses to be completed as efficiently as possible, but also an opportunity as well for students to develop socially and to soak up the rich and diverse intellectual atmosphere of a campus.

Some universities are allowing students to complete only a portion of their course requirements through computers. At Duke, students in the virtual business-degree program meet once every four months. Faculty say those sessions help build trust and familiarity between students working together, albeit on-line, on academic projects.

Other campuses, however, are reluctant to offer any virtual classes.

"We are not convinced we're ready to move that way," said John Payne, the director of educational technology at the University of Virginia. "It is an entirely different mind-set for colleges to consider, and it presents an awful lot of ques-

tions about the style in which you want your students to learn."

Life as a virtual student also has its own distinct glitches and shortcomings. Some colleges say lessons have been disrupted at times by computer problems. In some cases the programs are more costly because they require a computer and on-line access. Time differences can delay faculty responses to student questions.

There are other concerns. Cheating is an issue in any collegiate setting, especially when students are judged largely by research papers, take-home exams or the work they do in group academic projects. But some educators worry that the potential for academic fraud is even greater when faculty and students interact largely by computer. That is another reason why some new virtual programs also require students to spend some time in a traditional classroom.

"We do worry about it," said Richard Staelin, who directs Duke University's on-line initiative. "But I think it's less of an issue when you're dealing with mature students. We strongly believe in an honor code at Duke, and the more you have campus sessions along with the distance learning, it becomes less of an issue. But there will always be some opportunity for fraud."

The educators advocating virtual learning also say that, for all the shortcomings, on-line learning holds a number of advantages. The idea could broaden access to college, tap student markets overseas and save money. Costs are one of the central issues driving the governors to try to create an on-line university. Across the US, college enrollment is projected to rise through the next decade, and states such as Colorado, Nevada and Utah are bracing for much of the surge because their populations are growing sharply. But building new campuses to handle the influx of students would be expensive — far more, at least, than opening more classes in cyberspace.

The idea is to create a spectrum of courses in the arts and sciences, business and law, taught mostly by professors from universities in the states that are participating. Every course would be taught by computer or interactive video. The university would grant its own degrees, or have completed on-line courses count toward degrees at other participating universities.

College officials are closely watching how the project evolves. Many university business schools, looking for competitive edges in attracting students worldwide, also are studying virtual degree programs like the new one at Duke, which will double in size next year and include more than 80 graduate students.

"This is a paradigm shift in education," said Staelin. "We can do things we've never done before." (AP)

FLAIR



Cocktail waitress or bride? Hard to tell with this summer's wedding wear from Nina B (left) and Pnina Tornai. (Yossi Aloni and Izik Biran)



Here comes the bride, all dressed in... red?

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Forget about white. Few brides these days are as pure as the driven snow, and what's more important, they don't pretend to be. The upshot is a whole turn-around in bridal wear. Wedding gowns, once so regal that they made even the plainest bride look like a queen, now look as if they've been designed for a Las Vegas chorus line.

There are so many strapless bodices, that some Orthodox rabbis may well have reservations about officiating at wedding ceremonies. Even more provocative than the strapless bodice are the diaphanous creations which are much more suitable for the boudoir than the bridal canopy. Many designers of bridal wear

are basing their concepts on lingerie lines, so that detachable bodices resemble old-fashioned but very sexy corsets.

Pnina Tormai's velvet-ribboned strapless bodice with embroidered lace trim is worn over a theatricaly draped, wine-red, velvet skirt replete with bustle. The fact that the top and the skirt are detachable gives much more mileage to the outfit and makes the investment more worthwhile.

Tormai is not alone in using the detachable corset-style bodice as the mainstay of her wedding gowns. Partners Galla Lahav and Sharon Faibish do the same as does Nina B, whose bodices are colored and whose skirts are made up of multi-layers of white tulle festooned with a headline of full-blown roses in yellow and dif-

ferent shades of pink.

Though lavishly ornate wedding gowns are still in vogue, a stroll down the northern end of Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Street conveys the impression that wedding gowns are shrinking. Not only are necklines plunging to as low on the bust as decency will allow, but skirts are riding high to knee and mid-thigh lengths.

While religious brides continue to wear high-necked and long-sleeved demure white gowns, their secular sisters seem intent on letting it all hang out in ivory, silver gray, shades of pink, red, green — and even black. Except for the veil, a bride just doesn't look like a bride these days. Tradition has all but flown the coop.

The period between Pessah and Lag Ba'omer is when Israelis

think more about weddings and wedding gowns than at any other time of the year. If past years are an indicator, there will be a glut of prospective brides flooding bridal salons around the country over the next few weeks.

If you're a traditionalist, don't despair; there are salons where you can still get the kind of gown you dreamed about when you were a little girl — but making that dream come true will cost you somewhere between NIS 2,500 and NIS 7,000, depending on whether you rent or buy. If these prices are a little daunting and you know a good seamstress, go buy some attractive white curtain fabric and a bridal catalog. You can wind up with the most elaborate made-to-measure gown for under NIS 1,000.

CAVEAT EMPTOR!

Closing the gap in allowances for Holocaust survivors

By RUTHIE BLUM

On January 29, 1996, the High Court of Justice made a "strong recommendation" to the Treasury to increase monthly payments to Holocaust survivors who arrived in Israel before October 31, 1953. This recommendation was handed down following a petition to the High Court made with the help of MK Avraham Herschson (Likud).

According to the 1952 reparations agreement, the German government gave the Israeli government a lump sum

with which to compensate those survivors of the Holocaust who had arrived in Israel by October 1953. Under the terms of this agreement, survivors receiving money from the Israeli government waived the right to sue Germany in the future.

Survivors arriving in Israel after that date were not subject to the conditions of the Israel-Germany deal, and many of them simply sued the German government directly for reparations. Ironically, survivors receiving their money from the German government received sums three times greater than those survivors depen-

dent on the Israeli government for assistance.

About three months after the High Court recommendation, I was contacted by a survivor who noted that the government had not yet put this recommendation into effect.

This year, I was again contacted by a survivor complaining that the Treasury had not kept its promise to adopt the High Court's recommendations.

This is not so, according to the Finance Ministry's spokesman's office, which claims that the gap has been eliminated. Not only has a 24 percent increase in the

monthly payments to those survivors bound by the reparations agreement with Germany been put into effect (as of July 1996 and retroactive to March of that year), but a string of other cash-equivalent benefits has been added. Furthermore, according to the Treasury, it has never been proven that survivors receiving payments from Germany directly were receiving sums three times greater.

Whereas, prior to the High Court petition, the widows of such survivors were not eligible for payments, for example, now they hold the same status as other

disabled citizens. In addition, 30% of those survivors receiving a pension from the Israeli government are also eligible for an income supplement, depending on an examination of their total income.

According to the spokesman, prior to the Herschson petition the unintentional discrimination had to do with the fact that survivors were divided into three categories: those who received reparations from Germany, victims of Nazi persecution (partisans, etc.), and other victims of Nazi war crimes.

The Finance Ministry gave the victims of Nazi persecution the status of "dis-

abled" for the purpose of financial benefits.

A booklet detailing the rights and benefits for survivors is available from the Information Center of the Office for Rehabilitation of the Disabled in the Finance Ministry, 7 Kalman Magen Street, Tel Aviv, tel. (03) 697-2651/2. The booklet is free, but available only in Hebrew.

You are invited to offer personal stories about goods and services in this country. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

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Loss of confidence

Switzerland is expected to announce today the full list of officials for the Swiss humanitarian fund for needy Holocaust survivors. An affirmation of its purpose is also in order, as it is beginning to look like the fund was a good idea with a brilliant future behind it. It is being harmed by, on the one hand, indications that the Swiss banks may be diluting on their commitment, and by haggling over meaningless titles on the other.

The fund was started on February 5, when the three major Swiss banks—Credit Suisse, Swiss Bank Corporation, and Union Bank of Switzerland—announced they had opened an account with 100 million Swiss francs to form the basis of "The Humanitarian Fund for the Victims of the Holocaust." In a joint statement the banks declared, "The time has come for action, not words." They invited private industry and the Swiss National Bank to make additional contributions, and there are now pledges worth almost 300 million Swiss francs for the fund.

The banks dropped the task of dealing with the fund into the lap of the Swiss Federal Council, which issued a legal decree to govern it. That decree, which went into effect on March 1, said that the "Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoah" was "to support persons in need who were persecuted for reasons of their race, religion, or political views or for other reasons, or otherwise were victims of the Holocaust/Shoah, as well as to support their descendants in need."

That seemed clear enough. The fund was seen as a "goodwill gesture" and understood to stand apart from the Volcker Committee's investigative audit of dormant Swiss bank accounts, and from three class-action lawsuits, seeking billions of dollars, filed in the US against the banks. (A federal judge in Brooklyn today is to consider the banks' request that the lawsuits be dropped. The banks contend that there already are "cooperative" efforts under way to resolve claims.) But the fund's purpose was clouded recently when the chairman of Union Bank, Robert Studer, told his shareholders that the fund should be used to cover claims from the lawsuits. "Any potential claims will have to be settled from this [fund]," Studer said, adding that his bank had not made other provisions to pay damages stemming from the lawsuits.

It is hard to imagine that Swiss private indus-

try and the Swiss National Bank would have contributed to a fund to cover the banks' potential losses. The Swiss announcement must therefore state unequivocally whether this is a humanitarian fund for needy survivors or a private escrow account against the banks' future legal liabilities in American lawsuits.

Even without Studer's comment, the fund has been troubled. Another recent snafu is the compilation of the fund's executive, a seven-member panel that would have final approval over the allocations to Jewish and non-Jewish needy Holocaust survivors.

The executive is divided between "eminent" Swiss and Jewish members. The Swiss have four delegates, including the president of the fund, The Swiss Jewish leader, Rolf Bloch, has been named to that post, which arguably divides the position between the two sides. The World Jewish Restitution Organization has nominated Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, National Religious Party veteran Josef Burg, and MK Avraham Hirschson for the three non-Swiss slots. The delay in constituting the panel, according to news agency reports from Europe, was a scrap over the proper role for Wiesel. Maram Stern of the World Jewish Congress was quoted as saying that Wiesel should be given a ceremonial role as "international chairman." While Wiesel is a man of great stature, and his membership adds prestige to the executive, why should anyone waste time on "ceremonial" roles when there is such urgent work at hand?

It is easy to squander millions of francs, and hard to spend the money wisely. The administrators of the fund face some arduous decisions: They must determine what constitutes "need" and if the fund will be used for direct cash payments to individuals or for projects that serve survivors. They must calculate how to apportion the fund between survivors who have benefited from German reparations programs and those, especially in Eastern Europe, who have not. They must make difficult choices among survivors in different countries who have disparate standards of living, unequal costs of living, and uneven access to government-funded social services.

These are unpleasant moments for the fund. It is beginning to appear that the same banks accused of bilking Jewish depositors may be hoodwinking needy Holocaust survivors, and that the fund's key players are more concerned with titles than with critical tasks.

Trivial pursuits

There is a touch of sadness in the fact that Shimon Peres's career, after 50 long years of service to the country, is now being trivialized by a dispute over what authority he will have should he take the title "president of the Labor Party"—an honorific specially created for him.

The internal disputes and disarray within Labor over the past 11 months have hobbled the opposition. A functioning democracy needs an opposition in its parliament, but Labor seems to be speaking in multiple voices: at times some Labor MKs act as if they have not yet grasped that they are out of power, and at other times it appears as if the party leadership is doing everything it can to get back into positions of power, even at the cost of being junior members in a Likud-led unity government.

Peres grasped onto the possibility of a unity government with all his might, understanding that, short of a major political earthquake, only a unity government could, like an artificial life-support system, keep him going as Labor's leader. The decision on forming such a government was postponed until after the investigation into the Bar-On Affair. When the results of the police

investigation were publicized, Peres joined in the chorus of Labor MKs burying the idea of a unity government. Then last week it appeared as if he were trying to revive the idea after all.

In just over a month, Labor will elect a new chairman who will be the party's candidate for prime minister in the next general elections. The new leader will face the major task of rebuilding the party after its last defeat, reorganizing its financial base, and providing a unified direction for the party membership. The last thing he will need is a competing authority within the party itself to deal with.

In this context, the dispute over the authority to be granted to "Labor President Shimon Peres" looks suspiciously like just another attempt by Peres's supporters to ward off the option of his returning to a position of power, especially given MK Natan Sharansky's statement that the president's authority should be negotiated between the president and the new chairman. If the position of president carries even presumptions of elements of authority that are significantly more than an honorary or advisory position, this is inevitably a prelude to the ongoing internal strife.



ILLUSTRATION BY G. 97

A virus called terror

During the past few weeks a pernicious virus has killed hundreds of adults, children and babies across the globe. They died horribly, suffering indescribable pain. Yet oddly enough, neither the World Health Organization nor the Red Cross sent aid to the stricken.

The UN was too busy exorcising house-building in a Jerusalem suburb to give any thought to the virus. There were no State Department press briefings, no publicity-seeking politicians flying hither and thither pleading that "something must be done."

The virus struck in Xinjiang, western China. It struck in primitive villages in Algeria. It struck too in our own Wadi Kelt near Jericho. And prior to that in a smart Tel Aviv restaurant. Its shadow unexpectedly surfaced in a Berlin courtroom. So people know about the disease.

They also know that this virus of hatred is incubated in Iranian mosques. In Teheran, Ali Fallahian's Ministry of Special Affairs ensures that its agents seek out its victims wherever Moslems reside.

This week the Chinese executed three Moslem terrorists and jailed 27 others for bomb attacks on buses and elsewhere, which killed and injured dozens or even more, according to different sources.

Xinjiang is remote. No CNN, Fox TV or other inquisitive media operate in the region. When supporters of the convicted men, who beat or burnt their victims to death, demonstrated on their behalf, police opened fire, killing several in the crowd.

The unrest among the predominantly Moslem population of this area is unrelated to local grievances. It's Iran which aims to establish a breakaway independent Moslem fundamentalist state there called East Turkestan. In much the same way that Ali Fallahian masterminded the creation of a fundamentalist state in Sudan, Iran strives to do the same in Egypt by toppling the regime of President Mubarak.

Xinjiang has 15 million inhabitants. The province forms a sixth of all China and is strategically important as it borders Afghanistan, Pakistan and three other predominantly Moslem Central Asian states.

When Foreign Minister David Levy visited Beijing in January, he

URI DAN
DENNIS EISENBERG

was startled to hear his hosts complain about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. The puzzled Israeli guest made the shortest and by far the best speech of his life by answering "Us too."

XINJIANG'S disturbances are directed by Moslem Uighurs who live in neighboring Kazakhstan, formerly part of the Soviet Union.

The Iranian mullahs are now targeting China

As a French expert on the Far East told us: "The training and inspiration of these Uighurs stems directly from Teheran. But the Iranians tread carefully, keeping their identity as secret as possible. They don't want to upset Beijing. China supplies much of Iran's modern weaponry, especially long-range rockets capable of reaching Israel. That's why the Iranians operate via Kazakhstan."

The political acumen of the terrorists was demonstrated in February when they chose the day of former president Deng's funeral to explode two further bus bombs in the Xinjiang which injured 60 civilians and caused one death.

In a bid to minimize Moslem influence in that sparsely settled province, Beijing has sent Chinese settlers there, as they did in Tibet. According to Ismail Cengiz, the Uighur spokesman in Turkey, 200-300 rioters and Chinese police have died in recent demonstrations.

A French diplomat with wide experience in the Far East said: "Moslem cadres in the area have received training as well as financial and weapons support from Iran, and in recent months they have escalated their campaign of murder."

The same process is developing in Algeria. The Iranian mullahs plan to emulate their 10th-century forebears in using North Africa as a springboard from which to attack the unbelievers in Europe. And France's large Moslem population includes any number of youngsters willing to

act as a fifth column. Not only are there terrorist attacks in France, but a growing demand that Moslem children be allowed to practice their religion in state schools. And Moslems are calling for state aid for their religious institutions.

The reality of a Khomeini-style regime is becoming increasingly clear in Algeria. Terrorists have used knives, axes, electric drills, clubs, iron bars and other weapons to butcher peasants in isolated villages. More than 100 civilians, at least half of them women and children, have been mutilated during the past few weeks.

The stepped-up terror campaign is designed to influence Algeria's June elections, though it's difficult to grasp why fundamentalist terror should inspire votes.

Just as puzzling is the way the German authorities have done too little, too late to halt the sale of material which will enable Iran to continue to build up its chemical, biological, atomic and conventional armory.

Yet earlier this month a Berlin court ruled that Iranian state ministers were behind the slaying of one of its own citizens in Germany. Bonn called this a "flagrant breach of international law." Nonetheless, trade continues as usual.

In Israel too, Moslem fundamentalists recently kidnapped, killed and mutilated the body of the soldier Sharon Edri. And last week two young women, Hagit Zavitzky and Liat Kastiel, had their throats slit in Wadi Kelt. Four other young Israelis were killed there in the past before their assailants fled to Jericho, which is now a safe haven for terrorists.

From time to time the authorities in Teheran protest that they know nothing about Iran's promotion of terror. And Yasser Arafat, who by coincidence was in Jericho at the time of the Wadi Kelt murders, called the slayings "a barbaric, shameful, unethical act," adding "Whoever did it must be ashamed."

Yet Arafat knows, just as Israeli security chiefs know, that killers of Jews roam freely through the streets of Jericho and Gaza, where they are treated as Palestinian heroes.

The writers are authors of *The Massad: Secrets of the Israel Secret Service and other books on the Middle East.*

PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



Do you see what's wrong with this picture? Roving photographer James Levine snapped this sculpture of three children at play. But there is something inherently incorrect about the sculpture, which is prominently placed at the entrance to Hadassah Hospital's Mother and Child Center in Jerusalem. The boy is pushing the swing, but the standing girl is flying at high speed toward the boy—as you can see by the direction of her pigtails. Of course, if that girl really is moving forward, the boy's about to have his head knocked off.

(James Levine)

Hail the elite

LARRY DERFNER

There's a saying that goes something like this: Democracy is too precious a thing to entrust to the will of the people. It sounds ironic, but in many countries it's true, and I'm afraid Israel is one of them. The Bar-On Affair is demonstrating that.

The whole investigation—by the media, the police, the state attorney's office and the attorney-general—took place above the heads of the people. By "the people" I mean the *amcha*—the salt of the earth, Bibi's Jewish majority.

"The people" are that guy who showed up on television with his shirt off, relaxing at the beach, saying, "Why don't they quit bothering us with these committees, these investigations? Good food, the beach—this is what life is all about."

"The people" are also the crowds carrying Aryeh Deri on their shoulders, the folks who believe the Bar-On Affair was one big lie, a conspiracy by the left-wing elites to stick it to them. Other conspiracy theorists carry Netanyahu on their shoulders, still others carry Avigdor Lieberman. They're a multiethnic throng, and if they and the *fressers* at the beach don't add up to a Jewish majority, they come very close.

Worst of all, "the people" seem to be attracting new individuals to their ranks all the time.

Yet up above, the control mechanisms of democracy—the media, the police investigators, the state prosecutors, "elites" in the best sense of the word—functioned beautifully in the Bar-On Affair.

Regardless of all the popular indifference and ill will, regardless of three months of slander by Netanyahu, Deri, Lieberman and their friends, these investigators

The Bar-On Affair shows that democracy comes before popular opinion

went about their work and followed their information right to the prime minister's door.

It doesn't matter who recommended indictments and who didn't; they were all honest, they were all brave, and they wrote a brilliant new chapter in the history of Israeli democracy.

FOR now, they've beaten Netanyahu back. The prime minister can wave the Rubinstein-Arel report like it's some sort of certificate of merit, he can rage on about all the left-wing plotters out to get him, but he can't do what he'd like to do: take revenge.

I'd like to see him try to privatize Israel Television now. Let him try to get rid of Ayalon Hasson and all those at Channel 1 who backed her up. Let him try to remove Sando Mazar and the rest of the police investigative staff. Let him try to "replace the elites" in the justice system, especially the three senior prosecutors who wanted to indict him.

He can't do it. The institutions of democracy are stronger than he is. The intelligentsia would revolt. There would be Supreme Court appeals into the 21st century. Netanyahu's international standing would sink even lower than it has.

The prime minister also has one severe political constraint. There are a few people in his government who know the difference between right and wrong. I'm disappointed that Natan Sharansky, Dan Meridor and The Third Way didn't leave the government, but I don't believe they turned into Bibi's poodles by staying. They're honorable men, and if Netanyahu tries to act on his vindictive instincts, I trust that they will stop him.

The forces of democracy won the Bar-On Affair. It wasn't a knockout, but it definitely was a decision on points. The problem is, I don't know how long this can go on. I don't know how much longer the institutions of democracy, the control mechanisms, the elites can hold out against "the people."

When Netanyahu accuses the media and police of cooking up this whole scandal out of nothing, just to bring him down, and such a lie resonates as it does among the public, where are we headed?

When Shas comes out of the Bar-On Affair stronger than ever, and the leaders of the opposition feel compelled to make condolence calls on Aryeh Deri, what sort of future is waiting for us?

If "the people" decide, I think we may be in trouble.

The writer is a journalist living in Tel Aviv.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARAB MOTIVATION

Sir—As a psychiatrist with over 33 years of experience in treating the seriously mentally ill, I would like to take issue with your columnist Jon Immanuel, who purports to tell your readers what "psychiatrists" think in his "Tip of the iceberg" article of March 18. No psychiatrist has ever diagnosed any suicide bomber as a "lonely lunatic" because none of us psychiatrists has ever been able to conduct a psychiatric interview with a dead man.

One might be able to get an idea of the motivation of suicide bombers from the fact that they are praised and lauded as heroes and martyrs by Yasser Arafat and many other Arab spokesmen, as well as by their families and friends.

We might also learn something about suicide bombers if we go

back to the latter part of the World War II and consider the Japanese "kamikaze" suicide bombers who crashed their airplanes loaded with bombs into American warships in the hope of sinking them. My history book says that the Japanese military had many more volunteers for this suicide bombing mission than they had airplanes for that purpose. This was because it was considered to be a great honor "to die for the emperor."

A large number of Jews, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, have managed to delude themselves into believing that it is possible to make a lasting agreement with someone like Yasser Arafat, a man whose whole career is based upon lying, deception, violence, threats, bullying and intimidation.

Mr. Immanuel implies that

Arafat wants to be known as "the savior of the peace process" and someone who "finally" won the Nobel Peace Prize. I believe that this is the way Jon Immanuel would think of the world in the vision of Arafat.

It seems much more probable that Arafat wants to get down to the man who was responsible for the Arab state from the Madman to the Jihad. He will be angry and insulted by his government. He can accomplish that by a false deception, or by a real one. He will be angry as a great hero because he will have managed to feel the Jews who have managed to be regarded as a very important group of people.

YENYU SHERMAN, 110 Lafayette, California

INNOCENT

Mr. Goell raises his request on the assumption that had not even been proven at the time, that the prime minister has lost the public's trust. Since when in a democratic society does public trust between elections determine the resignation of a

lawfully elected prime minister? But the most important question is that in democratic societies, it is the responsibility of the public to elect a prime minister.

PAUL STASZEWSKI, 110 Lafayette, California

Jerusalem

מכאן לארץ

Albright boosts women's issues

By THOMAS W. LIPPMAN

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is elevating the importance of women's issues in America's international agenda, placing new emphasis on a policy originally promoted by President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Albright has instructed US diplomats around the world to make the furtherance of women's rights a central priority of American foreign policy.

The US government has been active in this field in a variety of ways: In Pakistan, the State Department contributed funds to a volunteer group running a school for Afghan refugee girls, who otherwise would go without education; in Namibia, the US embassy used its entire discretionary fund to finance community efforts to combat sexual violence against women; and in Washington, the State Department and the Justice Department will play host this month to two dozen Russian judges and law-enforcement officers in an effort to stop clandestine trafficking in Russian women, who are being duped into prostitution by organized crime figures who tell them they will appear in folk-music troupes.

"Advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative, it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States," Albright said recently at a ceremony at the State Department. "It is our mission. It is the right thing to do, and frankly it is the smart thing to do."

According to the State Department, Albright "has instructed all US embassies abroad to consider the advancement of women's human rights as an integral objective of US foreign policy." As with former secretary of state Warren Christopher's emphasis on the environment in Clinton's first term, it is not yet clear whether this stated commitment will amount to much in practice.

As one State Department official said, "We're upping the profile on this issue, but it's not going to start trumping other considerations. We aren't going to be beating up on the Saudis" about the status of women in that country, where women cannot drive and cannot travel without permission from their fathers or husbands.

"The Department of State and the Clinton administration have made some very strong



US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: 'I am not among those who believe that if the world were run solely by women, war would disappear.' (Brian Handberg)

and important pronouncements. What you don't see is what it means in practice," said Regan Ralph, who monitors women's issues for the watchdog group Human Rights Watch. "How publicly is this raised with some of the worst offenders? What have we seen is that other issues trump women's human rights. If the administration wants to maintain that it is promoting women's rights, it can't continue to do that. Let's see something beyond the words."

Albright and other officials, however, maintain that there is a broad range of activities where progress can be made with a small

investment of money or political capital, and that the administration is committed to doing as much as possible.

The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, for example, is working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to set standards for refugee camps on how far women's toilets should be located from their sleeping quarters. This might seem mundane, one official said, but it is part of an effort to minimize the chronic problem of violence against women in refugee sites.

Albright is America's first female secretary

of state, and is using her position to intensify an emphasis on women's rights that predates her appointment.

Both Clintons have been outspoken advocates of women's rights, as evidenced by Hillary Clinton's attendance at the 1995 UN women's conference in Beijing and the president's decision last year to invest \$5 million in a separate fund to provide loans and training for Bosnian women.

"What this administration believes," Hillary Clinton said when she joined Albright at a recent event, "is that if half the world's citizens are undervalued, underpaid, under-educated, under-represented, fed less, fed worse, not heard, put down, we cannot sustain the democratic values and way of life we have come to cherish."

"I am not among those who believe that if the world were run solely by women, war would disappear," Albright said. "The human capacity for folly and miscalculation is widely shared. But the history of this century tells us that democracy is a path to peace. And common sense tells us that true democracy is not possible without the full participation of women."

"I will state explicitly," she said, "that it is long past time for America to become party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women."

The treaty, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and signed by the US in the last year of the Carter administration, obligates signatories to condemn discrimination against women and take measures to combat it. But the Republican party branded it counterproductive and unenforceable.

"We fear that creating yet another set of unenforceable international standards will further dilute respect for international human rights norms," their report said.

Noting that Libya is among the signatories, Jesse Helms, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, and his fellow Republican senators said they reject "outright the view [advanced by the State Department] that the United States must be a party to the treaty in order to criticize or encourage other governments in their practices regarding women. We should not concede to countries such as Libya the moral high ground on women's issues simply because they have signed an unenforceable convention."

(The Washington Post)

Not Page One

Ordinary lies

By Sam Orbaum

Do politicians lie?

No, says Meir Porush.

Yes, says Eliezer Zandberg.

Truth is, that's a question most

people don't ponder, because most

people - I'd guess 99.999 percent -

think the issue is as debatable as the

question: "Are rabbis Jewish?" Ah,

but what do the politicians them-

selves say?

"Do we lie? You couldn't believe

me no matter how I answer that,"

said Hagai Meron. "Now and

then, I admit, even I have to lie a lit-

tle bit, if for good reason. But then I

pay for it when I look in the mirror."

"Yes," said Zandberg point-blank,

then smiled warmly. "We have to

sometimes. Doesn't everybody?"

Eli Goldschmidt: "Only if we

have to." Do you lie? "No."

Sometimes, he said, lying is a mat-

ter of fact, not of principle. "If some-

body makes a lousy speech, I'm not going

to tell him 'Hey, that was a lousy

speech.' One doesn't have to say the

whole truth. But in important politi-

cal matters, I think we should all tell

the truth.

"When an MK is sworn in, we

take a pledge. Maybe part of that

pledge should be 'I swear to uphold

the truth.' Goldschmidt grinned.

"Then we can all start off as liars!"

Shaul Amos: "Yes. Just as anyone

lie. I was a school principal and had

to be an example to the students.

When I went into politics, I brought

with me the same values. I see no

reason to lie. I think one of the rea-

sons for my success in politics is I

don't lie." Are others as honest?

"Many." How many?

"A hundred." Shevah Weiss esti-

mated. "No, 110." Has he had cause

to be among the 10 who aren't?

"I've lied. Only once." Ahh,

maybe a bit more than once. Gray

lies. For instance, I said at a gather-

ing, "You're a wonderful crowd,"

and said to myself something differ-

ent. That kind of lie I say maybe

once a month.

Yossi Beilin: "Yes." But no more

than ordinary people. What troubles

him are the deadly serious falsities.

"If it's a lie like the Anik Sharon

told about the Lebanon War, that's

what matters. A little lie here or

there, that's not really relevant."

The question was posed to

Ephraim Sneh - by Beilin, both of

whom are vying for the Labor lead-

ership. "Ephraim, *The Jerusalem**Post* here wants to know if politi-

cians lie. What do you think? Do we

lie? I said yes." Sneh: "I never lie."

Never?

"Never." We weren't going to let

him get away with that so easily. He

Michael Kleiner had no hesitation in naming his candidate for Most Honest Politician: Benny Begin; nor who he considers the most dishonest: Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo

The sad tale of the Kinneret Yemenites

By SHAY SHAPIRO

Some 1,200 Yemenite Jews answered the call from Shmuel Yavnieli and came to Palestine in 1912. Ten immigrant families were taken to an agricultural farm on the Kinneret. Their miserable fate is described by Professor Yehuda Nini in a 350-page volume just published by Am Oved.

Yavnieli's mission was sponsored by the Zionist organization and the Hapoel Hatzair movement in Palestine, with the double intention of saving Yemen's Jews from persecution and providing alternative workers in agricultural settlements to European-born, ideologically motivated pioneers.

Donating the garb of a Sephardi hakham (rabbi), Yavnieli - born Warshawski - crisscrossed southern Yemen for four months propagating the call to the Holy Land. He was opposed by the local sage, who claimed that the time of redemption had not yet come. Opposition also emerged from for-

mer Yemenite immigrants who had found conditions in Palestine too harsh to endure and had returned to Yemen.

But the number of those who were still ready to try was so great that the Zionist organization in Jerusalem instructed Yavnieli to cut his mission short, because no housing could be provided for the Yemenite newcomers.

In Kinneret, a training center for agricultural workers in an area where new villages were sprouting all the time, the Yemenites were not short of work. They were industrious people, and they readily accepted below-average wages. But the story of the 17 years they spent in Kinneret is unbelievably sad. Nini tells it with a touch of personal grief - he is of Yemenite origin.

All 10 Yemenite families in Kinneret shared just two small rooms in the "engine house," the structure above the water pump which regulated the irrigation system of the area. Sleeping outdoors summer and winter, many of them

contracted diseases, including malaria, which they caught during their short stay in Hadera before proceeding north. Only when World War I started, did the Zionist bureau in Jerusalem construct five houses for the Yemenites, but the promise to build five more was forgotten as Ashkenazi workers had taken over Kinneret to establish a kibbutz.

The kibbutzniks proffered some weighty ideological reasons to sustain their opposition. "In our opinion," their leader, Yosef Aharonovich, stated in 1913, "our duty is to revitalize the dry bones of the nation. In order to be able to do this, we must first revitalize the land. Hence, we must bring in pioneers who can do it."

The Yemenites were "just a philanthropic enterprise, important for the future; they are not the kind of people needed here at present." The "proper kind of people" were young men from eastern Europe, imbued with strong ideological determination to build a new Jewish nation according to a

socialist pattern.

The Yemenites were far from being socialists. They were deeply religious and, to the pioneers' regret, extremely superstitious. They attended prayers at the graves of the holy sages, particularly that of Rabbi Meir the Miracle Worker, near Tiberias. The cultural gap between the Yemenites and the Russians was too wide to be bridged in the foreseeable future.

The Yemenites must go. They would be better off somewhere else, in Jaffa or Rishon LeZion for instance, where most of their brethren had found work. But the Kinneret Yemenites refused to budge. They appealed to Avraham Harzfeld, known for his fatherly love of all new settlers.

They wrote letters of protest to the Zionist bureau in Jerusalem. They claimed they were able to farm the tract of land that had been promised to them by the Jewish National Fund - but which was finally denied them at the insis-

tence, of all people, of Ben Zion Yisraeli, a saintly and prominent member of Kibbutz Kinneret. Yisraeli declared that the kibbutz needed the land to raise fodder for its cows.

Finally, in 1932, the Yemenites were dislodged. They tried their luck in the village of Yavniel first, but ultimately settled in Marmorek, near Rehovot.

Yisraeli tenaciously maintained that the transfer was to benefit the Yemenites, who could not stand the climate in Kinneret. Nini would not buy it. The Kinneret Yemenites were not wanted. That they were callously chased out, Nini maintained, was due to an error of judgment only - or to inherent inadaptability of cultures, as Nini alleges.

Anyhow, the natural woes of immigrants to anywhere on this earth manifested itself among the Kinneret Yemenites, who suffered painful acrimony as opposed to the brotherly love they had expected with the Ingathering of the Exiles.

has to lie sometimes. But white lies, nothing that might be damaging. Do you lie? "Oh yeah, I lie a lot," he smiled. "To prevent people from getting hurt, of course." Just like a little constructive dishonesty is needed to assuage a squabbling couple, Amos said, sometimes the Likud and Labor need to hear dressed-up truths about each other to uphold the peace.

"When we have to lie for the sake of the public good, people accept that. But if it's for purposes of manipulation, that damages our reputation."

The question caught Sallah Tarif by surprise. "Wow," he said with a chuckle, and gave what he called an "unpolitical answer": "I'd say no, we don't have to, except when there's no choice. But a politician who's a consistent liar - and there are a lot like that - ooh-ah."

He declined the opportunity to name names - though not indirectly. "I know a prime minister who tells everybody what they want to hear. Tell me, that's not lying?" His crystal-clear clues left no doubt he was not referring to the leader of his Labor party. But, uh, couldn't the same be said about Arafat? "He's not among the most righteous of the world," Tarif allowed.

Do you lie? "The truth? Absolutely not. It's not in my culture, my mentality. To the Druze, a lie is a terrible thing. I might have to say something that's not entirely true, but if I have to lie outright, I shut my mouth."

Michael Kleiner: "A good politician doesn't have to lie. Maybe some are not such good politicians." It seems that honesty is not always the best policy if you want to get ahead in this business. Some of my colleagues said that the reason I'm just an MK now [and not a minister] is that I don't lie. I don't agree; it was just a matter of luck."

Kleiner had no hesitation in naming his candidate for Most Honest Politician: "Benny Begin" - nor whom he considers the most dishonest: "The mayor of Tel Aviv, Ronni Milo."

Abdel Wahab Darawshe: "I can tell you only about myself: I don't

laughed. "Never lie, never believe. That's my rule in politics."

No comment, don't quote me, keep me strictly off the record, said Benny Begin, requesting anonymity. Anat Maor doesn't lie. "Though I don't always tell all the truth," Della Itzik didn't hide her partisan-

ship. Netanyahu does, Rabin didn't. "Rabin was one of those people who you wonder how he ever ended up in politics." With her trademark radiant smile, she added: "But really, if I told the whole truth about Bibi, it wouldn't be nice."

Meir Porush said he doesn't, nobody does, and that "politicians who lie can't succeed." Then he named the tables: "Do you lie? Me! A journalist!"

Silvan Shalom found common ground with Porush. "You can't generalize. Do all journalists lie?" He resented being asked if he ever lied, and walked away. I presume he was mad I didn't answer his provocation first.

Haim Oron: "Why should we have to lie?" Uzi Landau: "If you ask the prime minister if there's a threat of war, and he tells you the truth; or if you ask the finance minister if there's going to be a devaluation tomorrow; maybe they're honest but smart they're not... Like the story of the horse that could count to 10; you could say it's a brilliant horse, but not a brilliant mathematician." What he meant by that I'm not sure, but it sounded good.

Ravitz: "Lie? I don't lie. But that doesn't mean I have to tell the whole truth."

Ruby Rivlin: "As long as it's understood there's a bit of fiddling going on, it's harmless."

"One lie you can get away with. Make it a habit, and the voters will draw conclusions." He doesn't, he said with a straight face. "Me? I've never lied before now." Yossi Sarid was once asked about a certain rival. He responded deftly: "I can't tell you, and I can't tell you the truth."

Does Arik Sharon lie? I asked him. "It's not a serious question," he said dismissively, though amicably. He didn't lie to me; he just chose not to tell the truth. So I suppose we'll never know.

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BUSINESS

in brief

First quarter tourism down 15%

Tourism Ministry statisticians reported yesterday that the continuing decline in the number of foreign tourists has abated, despite the fact that there were 15 percent fewer visitors during the first three months of 1997 than during the same months last year.

According to the ministry statistics, there were 528,100 visitors from abroad during the first quarter, a number which includes 36,700 cruise passengers and 116,900 who entered through land border crossings.

During March, there were 210,300 entries, 10% fewer than last March (during which Pessah fell in 1996). After correction for various seasonal variations, the ministry statisticians said the number of entries of air passengers during the January through March period was similar to that during the preceding two months and only slightly lower than the eight months before them.

This means, the experts explained, that the sharp decline in the number of tourists, which had continued until August, had largely abated, although there continued to be a slight decline in March.

Haim Shapiro

Likud's Shalom: Consult MKs on budget cut

The NIS 1 billion cut currently studied by the Treasury will not be supported by the coalition members of the Knesset Finance Committee unless Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Dan Meridor discuss its composition with them before approving it, coalition leader in the committee Silvan Shalom (Likud) said yesterday.

Shalom decided to make his remarks now to give the two ample time for consultations before introducing the proposals for the cuts to the cabinet. Meridor is expected to bring such a plan to the government in the coming weeks.

David Harris

Eitan: Defend farmers from Ronen report

Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan yesterday pledged to ask the government to introduce legislation defending farmers, in the wake of the Ronen committee report.

The Agricultural Planning Administration, headed by Eitan, made a strong attack yesterday on the report on the reform of the Israel Lands Administration.

The meeting, chaired by Eitan, said it was wrong that the ILA, which is under the control of the National Infrastructure Ministry, be allowed free rein over matters that should be run by the Agriculture Ministry.

David Harris

Fuel prices cut 1.2%

Fuel prices were amended at midnight last night, with 96 octane gasoline being reduced 1.2 percent from NIS 3.27 a liter to NIS 3.23. Unleaded gasoline (95 octane) now costs NIS 3.24, a 0.9% reduction.

Price changes at the refineries included a 0.6% decrease in household heating, fuel for public transport down 1%, civilian aircraft gasoline down 0.5%, and bitumen for road-laying 4.7% lower.

These changes match general price reductions in the Mediterranean region and the change in the dollar-shekel exchange rate.

David Harris

Public sector pay excess debate to resume

The government is scheduled tomorrow to discuss once again pay excesses in the public sector.

The last time the issue was brought before the cabinet by Finance Minister Dan Meridor he was told to enter direct negotiations with the Union of Local Authorities to find a compromise with the organization, which is fighting Treasury proposals to clamp down on those who pay or receive wages above the government-set guidelines.

David Harris

Treasury: Nixing property tax to cost state revenue NIS 150m.

By DAVID HARRIS

The proposed replacement of property tax with a business sales tax would create a NIS 150 million shortfall in state revenues, according to Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy.

Levy spoke of his concern immediately after the Gabbai committee on property tax reform presented its major conclusions to Deputy Finance Minister David Magen yesterday.

The committee, which will conclude its work on the report during the next two weeks, is recommending:

• The abolition of property tax, currently payable at 2.5 percent annually, which last year brought

NIS 954m. into the Treasury coffers.

• The introduction of a sales tax on buildings and land used for business purposes at a rate of 2.5%, with a taxable value of NIS 23 billion, raising an annual estimated NIS 575m.

• The introduction of a 1% sales tax on newly built apartments, with a taxable value of NIS 22b., raising approximately NIS 220m. each year.

The current tax is seen by all those on the committee as outdated and no longer appropriate, particularly as the 2.5% annual rate is some three times higher than the standard rate worldwide.

Those paying the tax have

changed radically over the years, with many people receiving exemptions and others being increasingly taxed as property prices have risen sharply.

While Magen asked the committee to examine the possibility of reducing the tax rather than abolishing it, the latter was seen as the only viable course.

However, Levy is concerned that "we could be replacing a bad tax with another bad tax."

While not committing himself one way or another, Levy said he needs time to consider the merits or otherwise of the sales tax proposal.

One of Levy's major concerns is the NIS 150m. shortfall, which committee chairman Yoram

Gabbai said would have to be made up via organizational changes in the Income Tax Commission.

"The property tax law currently brings the state some NIS 1b., and when you're thinking about abolishing such a law, you must find an alternative that will realize the same sum of money," said Levy.

All the members of the committee supported the recommendations, and they have been welcomed by Magen, who submitted them yesterday to Finance Minister Dan Meridor.

Magen wants to present the proposals to the cabinet before the Knesset reconvenes in two and a half weeks, at which time he intends to introduce a sales tax

bill.

If approved, the new system would begin on January 1, 1998.

The proposals were welcomed by Victims of Property Tax organization chairman Shabtai

Azriel.

However, he pointed out that the committee had not included his additional recommendation for a 1% increase in VAT, with a removal of VAT on all electricity bills.

Magen, who has indicated he will probably resign today, said that if he stays his next aim would be to tackle the major problem of non-disclosed money. He said there is a need to set fixed rate taxes in specific sectors, where it is impossible to know exact details of turnover.



Stranded passengers in France

Stranded passengers try to get information at Iberia's check-in desk at Paris's Orly Airport yesterday. Air traffic controllers at Orly staged their second strike this week, while walkouts dragged on at Air France Europe, TAT and Air Liberté. Air traffic controllers are demanding pay bonuses for heavy-traffic days.

(AP)

Kaplan may quit over differences with Leviev

By ELAZAR LEVIN
and Jerusalem Post Staff

Three months after being appointed by Africa Israel controlling shareholder Lev Leviev, general manager Avigdor Kaplan is considering resigning, company officials said yesterday.

According to the sources, Kaplan and Leviev have failed to create a harmonious working relationship between them, and in recent weeks the differences of opinion have surfaced at various senior management meetings.

Leviev, who made his fortune in the diamond business, bought into Africa Israel in the wake of Bank Leumi's need to shed large-scale non-banking holdings, in line with the revised Banking Law.

Originally, Bank Leumi had a controlling share in Africa Israel, the nation's second largest holding company.

Leviev, who is Orthodox, created a controversy when he announced he would put an end to Shabbat violations on Africa Israel's businesses, including Shabbat entertainment at the Ramat Aviv Mall, which is under construction.

The sources would not reveal whether the Leviev-Kaplan differences involved the controversy over the mall.

Kaplan was hired by Leviev in February after serving as general manager of Kupat Holim Clalit, and Kaplan requested a three-month trial period to learn the job and decide whether to continue on a long-term basis.

Globes

Controversy obstructs El Al privatization

By DAVID HARRIS

Differences in opinion among members of the government committee on the privatization of El Al are preventing the compilation of its recommendations, a senior government official told *The Jerusalem Post* this week.

The committee should have presented its proposals to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by early January, but ongoing differences over the method of privatization and particularly the thorny issue of flights on Shabbat are causing the hold-up, according to the official.

However, another senior government source denied there are disagreements and said the committee is only weeks away from completing its work.

The committee comprises Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's economics adviser Moshe Leon, Government Companies Authority director-general Tzipi Livni and Transport Ministry director-general Nahoum Langental.

Within the committee there is a difference of opinion between Leon and Langental over El Al's ability to operate as a private company without flights on Shabbat.

Leon is unsure the government can prevent a privatized El Al from flying on Shabbat, but Langental, whose minister is the NRP's Yitzhak Levy, maintains buyers can be found to operate it six days a week.

Netanyahu and Levy have been at loggerheads over the issue, with the latter stating in the Knesset that the company must not be allowed to fly on Shabbat after privatization.

The committee will probably present its recommendations to Netanyahu only in the middle of the month, according to Leon.

Leon recently said the plan would be finalized immediately after

Pessah, but yesterday said that "each time we think we're getting near, it turns out we have to carry on for another fortnight." However, he denied there are major differences of opinion within the committee.

"The committee is very close to completing its work," said another senior source. "It's just a case of phrasing."

In addition to the Shabbat factor, other outstanding questions include how many shares to offer in a public flotation, whether to sell them all in one public offering and also the issue of keeping the national carrier in Israeli hands.

Insurance now available to protect against buying stolen car

By JUDY SIEGEL

Watertight protection against financial loss due to the purchase of a vehicle that turns out to be stolen or attached by a lien is being offered for the first time starting on Monday.

The policy, from the Sahar insurance company, will cost NIS 95 and be in effect for two years after the vehicle transfer. It will be available at 260 postal branches, including those at vehicle testing and registration institutes.

Some 340,000 used vehicles change ownership each year. Although postal banks that expedite transfer of vehicle registration are on line, Sahar managing director Muki Abramovitz said yesterday that in about 10% of the cases, the Licensing Bureau's on-line computer operation is "not always very efficient and may not contain updated information."

This means that residents can pay tens of thousands of shekels for a used car that seems to be the property of the person selling it, when in fact it was stolen or held in lieu of an unpaid bank loan.

Abramovitz said that the Transport Ministry's licensing services is not legally bound to register liens on vehicles. It does so only voluntarily and not always completely efficiently or with the latest information, he said.

Communications Minister Limor Livnat yesterday welcomed Sahar's new service. Marketing is being done with the Postal Authority, whose director-general Moshe Tery said the new policy will save innocent citizens who were cheated from "the heartache of having vehicles

they bought taken away."

Abramovitz said that those with the special insurance policy will be paid quickly, even before the case is settled in court, "and we will cover the court expenses and act on behalf of our client in court."

In addition, the purchaser will not have to fear getting traffic or parking tickets made out to the previous owner of the vehicle. It will even cover cases in which the motor of a second-hand car is found to be stolen from another

car by having a different number than that marked on the vehicle license.

He expects that most of those buying used vehicles will opt to buy the insurance. "If the average person spends NIS 50,000 on a used car, it won't bother him to spend another NIS 95 on this insurance."

Transport Ministry spokesman Avner Ovadia said he was unaware of the new policy and of claims that License Bureau computers were not always updated.

Study: EU overpaid farmers \$19 billion

LONDON (Reuters) - The European Union has paid its cereal farmers some \$19 billion too much in compensation for price cuts that never happened, according to an internal memorandum by the British Agriculture Ministry.

In comments in Brussels, EU Farm Commissioner Franz Fischler agreed yesterday that farmers had been over-compensated for cuts in EU support prices, but he could not confirm a British calculation that put the total over four years at 17 billion Ecu - or about \$19.1b.

"There has been over-payment,

and this is my main argument - that the commission's proposal [to cut aid] should be left on the negotiating table," Fischler said.

Most EU farm ministers have strongly attacked Fischler's proposal to cut aid payments to cereal farmers by 1.4 billion Ecu to help provide aid for beef producers hit by the mad cow crisis.

Fischler was responding to a question about the British Agriculture Ministry report on which details emerged in London yesterday. He said overpayments varied between countries but were highest in Britain.

The cornerstone of 1992 reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy was a decision to cut cereal

support prices progressively over three years, and compensate farmers by providing area-based payments.

"These have been paid in full, even though EU cereal market prices have not fallen in line with the reduction in support prices," the British memorandum said. "As a result, farmers have been compensated for price cuts which have not fully materialized."

The document did not suggest what action the British government might take. "It depends on who gets in and what they want to do," a ministry spokesman said, referring to whichever government comes in after a general election today. "It's an EU issue," he said.

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Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)					
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS		
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.750	4.000	5.375		
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250		
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	2.125		
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000		
Yen (10 million yen)					
(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)					
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (30.4.97)					
CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep.	
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Rates**	
Currency basket	3.6410	3.6996	—	3.6788	
U.S. dollar	3.5718	3.4282	3.31	3.48	3.4070
German mark	1.9518	1.9833	1.81	2.02	1.9726
Pound sterling	5.4323	5.5809	5.39	5.66	5.5493
French franc	0.6787	0.5881	0.56	0.60	0.5851
Japanese yen (100)	2.0814	2.7044	2.61	2.75	2.6877
Dutch florin	1.7350	1.7630	1.70	1.79	1.7638
Swiss franc	2.2961	2.3332	2.25	2.37	2.3186
Swedish krona	0.4311	0.4381	0.42	0.45	0.4356
Norwegian krona	0.4738	0.4815	0.48	0.49	0.4797
Danish krona	0.6127	0.6210	0.60	0.53	0.6182
Finnish mark	0.6481	0.6586	0.63	0.58	0.6560
Canadian dollar	2.4130	2.4520	2.37	2.49	2.4401
Australian dollar	2.6352	2.6778	2.59	2.72	2.6624
S. African rand	0.7581	0.7704	0.68	0.78	0.7662
Belgian franc (10)	0.9451	0.9614	0.92	0.98	0.9581
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7729	2.8177	2.72	2.86	2.8031
Italian lira (1000)	1.9557	2.0005	1.93	2.03	1.9910
Jordanian dinar	4.6900	5.0100	4.69	5.04	1.0061
Egyptian pound	0.9600	1.0400	0.96	1.04	1.0061
ECU	3.8117	3.8732	—	—	3.8511
Irish punt	5.0678	5.1496	4.98	5.23	5.0809
Spanish peseta (100)	2.3144	2.3516	2.27	2.29	2.3370
*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.					
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Marx	100.4	+0.25	100.65	0	100.65
Marx & Melun	2.25	0	2.25	0	2.25
Marvel	37.76	-0.375	37.39	-0.25	37.14
Marx Corp.	38	-0.375	37.63	-0.75	36.88
Massachusetts Corp.	37.375	+0.5	37.875	0	37.875
Master Inc.	22.375	-0.125	22.25	-0.25	22.00
Master Corp.	33.5	-0.25	33.25	-0.25	33.00
McTherrell	53.625	-0.75	52.875	-0.25	52.625
McDonald	68.25	-0.75	67.50	-0.25	67.25
McDonald Dymally	50.875	-1.125	49.75	-0.25	49.50
McGraw Hill					
Min R. Eng. Inc.			27.5	0	27.5
Southwest Airlines			55.5	-0.25	55.25
Southwestern Bell			40.75	-0.25	40.50
Spring Bros.			43.975	-0.25	43.725
Spirit Corp.			21.875	-0.375	21.50
Standard Prods.			33.875	-0.75	33.125
Stanley Works			10.125	+0.5	10.625
Storage Technol.			35.125	-0.25	34.875
Stamps Corp.			38.675	-1.125	37.55
Stan Corp.			1.75	0	1.75
Sun Company			27.575	-0.555	27.025
Suncoast			46.75	-0.25	46.50
Swire			55.4	0	55.4
Thomson Br.			78	0	78
Thomson			24.15	0	24.15
Transamerica			881	+0.2	881.2
Transgasellschaft			55.5	0	55.5
Porsche			250	+0.5	250.5
Stamps			59.5	+1.52	61.02
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Knesset votes to give Bar-On Affair a rest

By LIAT COLLINS

After five speeches in two hours on the Bar-On Affair, the Knesset yesterday defeated motions by Labor and Meretz to continue the discussions in the plenum or a Knesset committee. The vote was 25 for, 33 against, and one abstention.

Various aspects of the affair were raised in a special session convened during the recess. The Knesset is to reconvene in two weeks for another special session called by Labor on "The death of the peace process and a year of the Netanyahu government."

The High Court of Justice is to hear five petitions on the Bar-On Affair on Sunday, the court announced yesterday. A bench of five justices - Shlomo Levin, Eliezer Goldberg, Theodor Or, Yitzhak Zamir,

and Dalia Dorner - will hear petitions submitted by the Movement for Quality Government, Meretz, Labor MKs Yossi Beilin and Yona Yahav, Labor MK Ophir Pines, and Jerusalem lawyer Yehudi Ron-El and school principal Ami Katz.

At yesterday's Knesset session, Moshe Shahal, speaking on behalf of Labor, opened the discussion with a legal analysis of the report by the attorney-general and state attorney. He called for a commission of inquiry and trial of all those involved and criticized attempts to link the decision to indict Shas leader Aryeh Deri with ethnic or religious discrimination.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid spoke at length against the government in a motion entitled, "Who heads the country, a government or a group?" He said the last

word should have read "gang."

Sarid said the decision-making process behind the appointment of Roni Bar-On as attorney-general showed how the government makes decisions on other issues, including defense and foreign policy. He lashed into Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for their role in the Bar-On Affair, calling it "part of a greater plan to turn the Justice Ministry into a rubber stamp to blindly approve all the government's decisions, actions, and I could say crimes."

Likud and coalition faction chairman Michael Eitan quoted the report at length to show it had stated there was no evidence of any criminal act by the prime minister or other ministers. "There are three central findings in the report which

cannot be ignored," Eitan said. "There was no Bar-On-for-Hebron deal; there was no deal promised to Aryeh Deri by the prime minister; and there was no deal promised him by Bar-On."

Eitan said he wanted to know what promises had been made to Deri and Shas spiritual leader Ovadia Yosef by Labor leaders "who made pilgrimages to them."

Shas's motion, "The feeling of discrimination which arises from the attorney-general's decision on the Bar-On Affair," was presented by Nissim Dahan, who said the disappearance of Yemenite and Moroccan immigrant children in the early years of the state had not been forgotten. "We'll continue to fight for the removal of discrimination, so that someone who was born in Morocco can be prime minister."

Dahan said. Communications Minister Limor Livnat, answering on behalf of the government, blasted the opposition for its demand to establish a state commission of inquiry into the affair. "Even the High Court isn't enough to satisfy the opposition's lust for power," she said. "What will you do tomorrow, go to the international court in the Hague? Where else will you go and what else will you do to question the decision by the legal establishment (not to indict Netanyahu and Hanegbi)?"

She said the prime minister had admitted he had made a mistake, but said the public would judge him in the polling booths in the next elections, in 2000. She also warned against people translating criticism of the media into justification for violence.



Shas supporters protest against MK Aryeh Deri's pending indictment in front of the Knesset yesterday, while the plenum debates the Bar-On Affair. (Brian Hendler)

Shas suspends Deri petition campaign

By LIAT COLLINS

Shas decided yesterday to suspend its campaign to have MKs sign a petition calling on Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein to reconsider the decision to indict party leader Aryeh Deri over the Bar-On Affair. Deri apparently asked the activity be halted at least until after the High Court rules on several petitions relating to the affair.

Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri said Deri preferred that all other democratic measures be exhausted before the petition campaign be resumed.

Although many MKs had promised to sign the petition, an undisclosed but apparently small number actually did so.

MK Yitzhak Cohen, who was organizing the

campaign, said Shas had agreed to Deri's request. He also said Shas opposes a state commission of inquiry because "the motive behind the call is to topple the government, not investigate the truth."

Outside the Knesset, a group of Shas activists held a small vigil in support of Deri and the party.

At the Labor faction meeting before the special plenum debate started, MKs called for a state commission of inquiry into the Bar-On Affair and more public pressure to establish it.

Opposition leader Shimon Peres said: "There are still many question marks. I've never seen a report which raised so many legal, moral, and political doubts as this report. It left a big question mark over possibly the most vital issue in a democratic regime: the rule of law and justice."

The Third Way MKs decided not to sign the Shas petition, saying they oppose political intervention in the decisions of the judiciary. The faction also does not support a commission of inquiry on the grounds that all the investigative measures were taken in the police and Rubinstein's inquiries.

The Third Way has established a team to formulate steps and legislation necessary to improve the functioning of the government.

Yisrael Ba'aliya MKs said it would be wrong to exploit the Rubinstein's recommendations for political means. They called for unity and efforts to close social gaps.

The National Religious Party issued a statement expressing "satisfaction" with Shas's decision not to continue with the campaign.

IDF: Hizbullah moral down

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Hizbullah is on a downswing, guerrillas are deserting and it is having difficulty recruiting new members to take their place, the commander of IDF forces in south Lebanon said in an interview published this week. According to Brig-Gen. Eli Amitai, commander of the Lebanon Corps, IDF forces found 17 shoulder-held Strella missiles hidden in a cave in the Litani area. The missiles are capable of shooting down jets and helicopters, Amitai said in an interview with the *Air Force Magazine*.

"A new situation has been created in Lebanon in which we have great superiority," Amitai was quoted as saying. "The Hizbullah organization is in a state of shrinking as a result of our operations and its people are more afraid of entering the security zone than in the past," Amitai was quoted as saying.

Amitai, who survived two direct Hizbullah attacks since taking over command of the IDF forces in Lebanon last summer, said IDF-initiated actions were finally showing an effect against the Hizbullah guerrillas.

"Today, people are more afraid

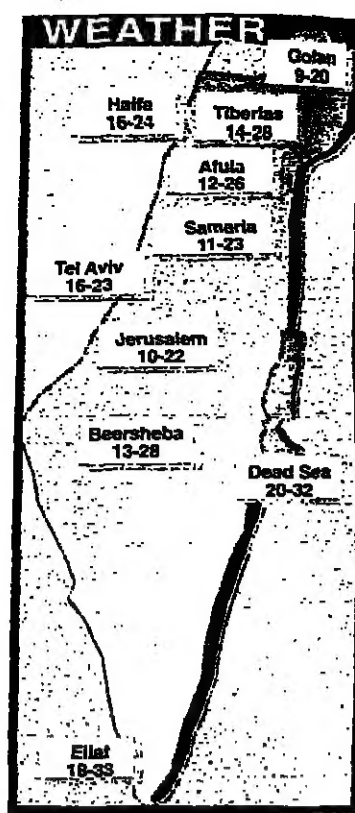
of joining Hizbullah and even Hizbullah members themselves are afraid of acting," Amitai said. "The fact is, that Hizbullah is not only finding it difficult to win over new members to its ranks, but it is experiencing desertions."

"The turning point came as a result of the actions we are taking which are more suitable against guerrilla warfare," Amitai was quoted as saying. "Today we are attacking targets based on intelligence information and action against infrastructure."

He added that in the past three months the Air Force had succeeded in "tipping the scales" in Lebanon through a number of missions which involved advance weaponry. He did not elaborate but said that the IAF was using new weapons that allow for much greater accuracy.

"We have hit the terrorists in places where they are still gathering before setting out. The other side understands very well the change and is being more careful now."

According to the London-based *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Israel has recently doubled the number of its troops in south Lebanon to 2,000 men.



AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	WIND
Amsterdam	03	17	18
Berlin	08	15	15
Buenos Aires	19	23	15
Cairo	19	31	28
Chicago	11	20	13
Copenhagen	07	10	13
Frankfurt	10	14	17
Geneva	09	16	13
Helsinki	05	13	10
Hong Kong	24	28	12
London	08	17	12
Los Angeles	15	21	10

Winning cards

The winning cards in yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance drawing were the queen of spades, 8 of hearts, ace of diamonds, and jack of clubs.

Hussein allows Abu Marzook back

AMMAN (Reuters) - King Hussein has decided to Mousa Abu Marzook, the political leader of Hamas, back into Jordan two years after he was expelled and jailed in the US. Information Minister Samir Mutawae said yesterday.

"His Majesty, for humanitarian reasons, has approved allowing Abu Marzook to come back to Jordan without any obligations," Mutawae told Reuters.

Abu Marzook was arrested in New York a few weeks after he left Jordan. Although never charged, he has been in detention since then while Israel sought his extradition.

But security officials said in February that Israel, fearing a wave of violence, had decided to extradite him. Abu Marzook was extradited to a deal with Israel, was examined and sent him to Jordan and the US kept its promise to Amman in return for a shun violence.

Mutawae did not say whether Abu Marzook, who has political activities while in Amman, had made any pledge to avoid violence.

Police bust drug ring

By RAINE MARCUS

The Tel Aviv narcotics squad, assisted by police in Europe and Australia, yesterday arrested seven people, from different parts of the country, suspected of organizing drug smuggling from the Far East and Europe.

The seven, all in their mid-20s, are suspected of importing liquid cocaine and ecstasy pills via couriers. Liquid cocaine is manufactured in South America, and first made its appearance here two years when it was smuggled in bottles of Colombian liquor. It is usually processed into powder.

The case surfaced in November 1996, when two Israeli citizens in possession of 10 kilograms of liquid cocaine were arrested in Germany. One has since been sentenced to five years in a German prison. A month ago, another Israeli was arrested in Australia after being caught trying to smuggle hundreds of ecstasy pills out of the country.

Several other Israelis, believed to be involved in the worldwide smuggling ring and in money laundering from drug trafficking proceeds, were arrested in Australia last week. The arrests led local police to begin surveillance of seven people suspected of playing different roles in various smuggling operations. The seven will appear in Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court for a remand hearing this morning.

According to police, the gang is also suspected of organizing acid and ecstasy parties in India, Australia, Europe, and Israel.

US: Iran chief terror state

By DEBORAH ZABARENKO

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The US State Department said yesterday that Iran remained the chief sponsor of "international terrorism" in 1996, a year in which deaths from what it described as terror attacks nearly doubled.

In its annual report "Patterns of Global Terrorism," the department listed six other countries that it alleged also sponsored terrorism: Cuba; Iraq; Libya; North Korea; Sudan; and Syria. All seven were included on last year's list.

The report said that in 1996 Iran was "involved in the planning and execution of terrorist acts by its

own agents and others such as the Lebanese Hizbullah and continued to fund and train known terrorist groups."

Deaths from "international terrorism" acts nearly doubled to 311 in 1996 from 163 in 1995, the report said.

"The death toll from acts of international terrorism rose ... as the trend continued toward more ruthless attacks on mass civilian targets and the use of more powerful bombs," the report said.

The dominant forces in its picture of global terrorism were "religious fanatics and groups manipulating religion, especially Islam, for political purposes," the report said.

Syria denies nerve gas allegations

DAMASCUS (AP) - Syria yesterday denied Israeli allegations that it had put deadly nerve gas in surface-to-surface missiles capable of hitting Israel.

Al-Baath, the paper of Syria's ruling Baath party, accused Israel of a "misleading campaign" to

draw attention from its hard-line stance toward the Arabs, which has stalled the Middle East peace process.

"The Israeli media's misleading campaign was not a surprise, as it has become one of the Israeli policy's main pillars that aim at

undermining Syria's firm stand," the paper said.

It accused Israel of planning to "use it as a pretext in any American-Israeli talks" to counter American concern over the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

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